

OUTLINES
OF
MAHÂYÂNA BUDDHISM.

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BY

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PREFACE

The object of this book is twofold (1) To refute the many wrong opinions which are entertained by Western critics concerning the fundamental teachings of Mahâyâna Buddhism, (2) To awake interest among scholars of comparative religion in the development of the religious sentiment and faith as exemplified by the growth of one of the most powerful spiritual forces in the world. The book is therefore at once popular and scholarly. It is popular in the sense that it tries to expose the fallacy of the general attitude assumed by other religionists towards Mahâyânism. It aims to be scholarly, on the other hand, when it endeavors to expound some of the most salient features of the doctrine, historically and systematically.

In attempting the accomplishment of this latter object, however, the author makes no great claim, because it is impossible to present within this prescribed space all the data that are available for a comprehensive and systematic elucidation of the Mahâyâna Buddhism, whose history began in the sixth century before the Christian era and ran through a period of more than two thousand years before it assumed the form in which it is at present taught in the Orient. During this long period, the Mahâyâna

doctrine was elaborated by the best minds that India, Tibet, China, and Japan ever produced. It is no wonder then that so many diverse and apparently contradictory teachings are all comprised under the general name of Mahâyâna Buddhism. To expound all these theories even tentatively would be altogether outside the scope of such a work as this. All that I could or hoped to do was to discuss a few of the most general and most essential topics of Mahâyânism, making this a sort of introduction to a more detailed exposition of the system as a whole as well as in particular.

To attain the first object, I have gone occasionally outside the sphere within which I had properly to confine the work. But this deviation seemed imperative for the reason that some critics are so prejudiced that even seemingly self evident truths are not comprehended by them. I may be prejudiced in my own way, but very frequently I have wondered how completely and how wretchedly some people can be made the prey of self delusion.

The doctrinal history of Mahâyâna Buddhism is very little known to Occidental scholars. This is mainly due to the inaccessibility of material which is largely written in the Chinese tongue, one of the most difficult of languages for foreigners to master. In this age of liberal culture, it is a great pity that so few of the precious stones contained in the religion of Buddha are obtainable by Western people. Human nature is essentially the same the world over and

• whenever and wherever conditions mature we see the same spiritual phenomena, and this fact ever strengthens our faith in the universality of truth and in the ultimate reign of lovingkindness. It is my sincere desire that in so far as my intellectual attainment permits I shall be allowed to pursue my study and to share my findings with my fellow beings.

• In concluding this prelude, the author wishes to say that this little book is presented to the public with a full knowledge of its many defects, to revise which he will not fail to make use of every opportunity offered him.

DAISETSU T. SUZUKI

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INTRODUCTION.

I. THE MAHÂYÂNA AND THE HÎNAYÂNA BUDDHISM

THE terms "Mahâyâna" and "Hînayâna" may sound unfamiliar to most of our readers, perhaps even to those who have devoted some time to the study of Buddhism. They have hitherto been induced to believe that there is but one form of Buddhism, and that there exists no such distinction as Mahâyânism and Hînayânism. But, as a matter of fact, there are diverse schools in Buddhism just as in other religious systems. It is said that, within a few hundred years after the demise of Buddha, there were more than twenty different schools,¹ all claiming

¹ According to Vasumitra's *Treatise on the Points of Contention by the Different Schools of Buddhism*, of which there are three Chinese translations, the earliest being one by Kumârajîva (who came to China in A. D. 401) the first great schism seems to have broken out about one hundred years after the Buddha. The leader of the dissenters was Mahâdeva, and his school was known as the Mahâsangika (Great Council), while the orthodox was called the school of Sthavîras (Elders). Since then the two schools subdivided themselves into a number of minor sections, twenty of which are mentioned by Vasumitra. The book is highly interesting as throwing light on the early pages of the history of Buddhism in India.

to be the orthodox teaching of their master. These, however, seem to have vanished into insignificance one after another, when there arose a new school quite different in its general constitution from its predecessors, but far more important in its significance as a religious movement. This new school or rather system made itself so prominent in the meantime as to stand distinctly alone from all the other schools which latter became a class by itself. Essentially, it taught everything that was considered to be Buddhistic, but it was very comprehensive in its principle and method and scope. And by reason of this, Buddhism was now split into two great systems, Mahāyānism and Hinayānism, the latter indiscriminately including all the minor schools which preceded Mahāyānism in their formal establishment.

Broadly speaking, the difference between Mahāyānism and Hinayānism is this. Mahāyānism is more liberal and progressive, but in many respects too metaphysical and full of speculative thoughts that frequently reach a dazzling eminence. Hinayānism, on the other hand, is somewhat conservative and may be considered in many points to be a rationalistic ethical system simply.

Mahāyāna literally means 'great vehicle' and Hinayāna 'small or inferior vehicle,' that is, of salvation. This distinction is recognised only by the followers of Mahāyānism, because it was by them that the unwelcome title of Hinayānism was given to their rival brethren — thinking that they were more pro-

•gressive and had a more assimilating energy than the latter. The adherents of Hīnayānism, as a matter of course, refused to sanction the Mahāyānist doctrine as the genuine teaching of Buddha, and insisted that there could not be any other Buddhism than their own, to them naturally the Mahāyāna system was a sort of heresy.

Geographically, the progressive school of Buddhism •found its supporters in Nepal, Tibet, China, Corea, and Japan, while the conservative school established itself in Ceylon,¹ Siam, and Burma. Hence the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna are also known respectively Northern and Southern Buddhism.

En passant, let me remark that this distinction however, is not quite correct for we have some

¹ The Anagārika Dharmapala of Ceylon objects to this geographical distinction. He does not see any reason why the Buddhism of Ceylon should be regarded as Hīnayānism when it teaches a realisation of the Highest Perfect Knowledge (*Anuttara samyak sambodhi*) and also of the six Virtues of Perfection (*Paramits*), — these two features, among some others being considered to be characteristic of Mahāyānism. It is possible that when the so-called Mahāyānism gained great power all over Central India in the times of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva it also found its advocates in the Isle of Lion or at least the followers of Buddha there might have been influenced to such an extent as to modify their conservative •views. At the present stage of the study of Buddhism, however it is not yet perfectly clear to see how this took place. When a thorough comparative review of Pāli, Singhalese, Tibetan, Sanskrit and Chinese Buddhist documents is effected we shall be able to understand the history and development of Buddhism to its full extent.

schools in China and Japan, whose equivalent or counterpart cannot be found in the so-called Northern Buddhism, that is, Buddhism flourishing in Northern India. For instance, we do not have in Nepal or in Tibet anything like the Sukhāvati sects of Japan or China. Of course, the general essential ideas of the Sukhāvati philosophy are found in the sūtra literature as well as in the writings of such authors as Aśva-ghosa, Asanga, and Nāgārjuna. But those ideas were not developed and made into a new sect as they were in the East. Therefore, it may be more proper to divide Buddhism into three, instead of two, geographical sections: Southern, Northern, and Eastern.

Why the two Doctrines?

(In spite of this distinction, the two schools, Hīnayānism and Mahāyānism, are no more than two main issues of one original source, which was first discovered by Çākyamuni, and, as a matter of course, we find many common traits which are essential to both of them. The spirit that animated the innermost heart of Buddha is perceptible in Southern as well as in Northern Buddhism. The difference between them is not radical or qualitative as imagined by some. It is due, on the one hand, to a general unfolding of the religious consciousness and a constant broadening of the intellectual horizon, and, on the other hand, to the conservative efforts to literally preserve the monastic rules and traditions. Both schools started with the same spirit, pursuing the

same course. But after a while one did not feel any necessity for broadening the spirit of the master and adhered to his words as literally as possible, whilst the other, actuated by a liberal and comprehensive spirit, has drawn nourishments from all available sources, in order to unfold the germs in the original system that were vigorous and generative. These diverse inclinations among primitive Buddhists naturally led to the dissension of Mahâyânism and Hīnayânism.

We cannot here enter into any detailed accounts as to what external and internal forces were acting in the body of Buddhism to produce the Mahâyāna system, or as to how gradually it unfolded itself so as to absorb and assimilate all the discordant thoughts that came in contact with it. Suffice it to state and answer in general terms the question which is frequently asked by the uninitiated: "Why did one Buddhism ever allow itself to be differentiated into two systems, which are apparently in contradiction in more than one point with each other? In other words, "How can there be two Buddhisms equally representing the true doctrine of the founder?"

The reason is plain enough. The teachings of a great religious founder are as a rule very general, comprehensive and many sided and therefore, there are great possibilities in them to allow various liberal interpretations by his disciples. And it is on this very account of comprehensiveness that enables followers of diverse needs, characters, and trainings to

satisfy their spiritual appetite universally and severally with the teachings of their master. This comprehensiveness, however, is not due to the intentional use by the leader of ambiguous terms, nor is it due to the obscurity and confusion of his own conceptions. The initiator of a movement, spiritual as well as intellectual, has no time to think out all its possible details and consequences. When the principle of the movement is understood by the contemporaries and the foundation of it is solidly laid down, his own part as initiator is accomplished, and the remainder can safely be left over to his successors. The latter will take up the work and carry it out in all its particulars, while making all necessary alterations and ameliorations according to circumstances. Therefore, the rôle to be played by the originator is necessarily indefinite and comprehensive.

Kant, for instance as promotor of German philosophy, has become the father of such diverse philosophical systems as Jacobi's, Fichte's, Hegel's, Schopenhauer's etc., while each of them endeavored to develop some points indefinitely or covertly or indirectly stated by Kant himself. Jesus of Nazareth as instigator of a revolutionary movement against Judaism did not have any stereotyped theological doctrines, such as were established later by Christian doctors. The indefiniteness of his views was so apparent that it caused even among his personal disciples a sort of dissension, while a majority of his disciples cherished a visionary hope for the advent

of a divine kingdom on earth. But those externalities which are doomed to pass, do not prevent the spirit of the movement once awakened by a great leader from growing more powerful and noble.

The same thing can be said of the teachings of the Buddha. What he inspired in his followers was the spirit of that religious system which is now known as Buddhism. Guided by this spirit, his followers severally developed his teachings as required by their special needs and circumstances, finally giving birth to the distinction of Mahāyānism and Hinayanism.

The Original Meaning of Mahāyāna

The term Mahāyāna was first used to designate the highest principle, or being, or knowledge, of which the universe with all its sentient and non sentient beings is a manifestation and through which only they can attain final salvation (*mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*). Mahāyāna was not the name given to any religious doctrine, nor had it anything to do with doctrinal controversy, though later it was so utilised by the progressive party.

Açvaghosa, the first Mahāyāna expounder known to us, — living about the time of Christ, — used the term in his religious philosophical book called *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* ¹ as synonymous with Bhūtatathātā, or Dharmakāyā, ² the

¹ Translated into English by the author 1900 The Open Court Pub Co Chicago

² These terms are explained elsewhere

highest principle of Mahâyânism. He likened the recognition of, and faith in, this highest being and principle into a conveyance which will carry us safely across the tempestuous ocean of birth and death (*samsâra*) to the eternal shore of Nirvâna.

Soon after him, however, the controversy between the two schools of Buddhism, conservatives and progressionists as we might call them, became more and more pronounced, and when it reached its climax which was most probably in the times of Nâgârjuna and Âryadeva, i. e., a few centuries after Açvaghosa the progressive party ingeniously invented the term Hinayâna in contrast to Mahâyâna the latter having been adopted by them as the watchword of their own school. The Hinayânists and the Tirthakas¹ then were sweepingly condemned by the Mahâyânists as inadequate to achieve a universal salvation of sentient beings.

An Older Classification of Buddhists

Before the distinction of Mahâyânists and Hinayânists became definite, that is to say at the time of Nâgârjuna or even before it, those Buddhists who held a more progressive and broader view tried to distinguish three yânas among the followers of the Buddha viz., Bodhisattva yâna, Pratyekabuddha yâna and Çrâvakâo² yâna, yâna being another name for class.

¹ Followers of any religious sects other than Buddhism. The term is sometimes used in a contemptuous sense like heathen by Christians.

The Bodhisattva is that class of Buddhists who, believing in the Bodhi (intelligence or wisdom), which is a reflection of the Dharmakāya in the human soul, direct all their spiritual energy toward realising and developing it for the sake of their fellow creatures

The Pratyekabuddha is a "solitary thinker" or a philosopher, who retiring into solitude and calmly contemplating on the evanescence of worldly pleasures, endeavors to attain his own salvation, but remains unconcerned with the sufferings of his fellow beings. Religiously considered, a Pratyekabuddha is cold, impassive, egotistic, and lacks love for all mankind

The Śrāvaka which means 'hearer' is inferior in the estimate of Mahāyānists even to the Pratyeka buddha, for he does not possess any intellect that enables him to think independently and to find out by himself the way to final salvation. Being endowed, however, with a pious heart he is willing to listen to the instructions of the Buddha to believe in him, to observe faithfully all the moral precepts given by him, and rests fully contented within the narrow horizon of his mediocre intellect

To a further elucidation of Bodhisattvahood and its important bearings in the Mahāyāna Buddhism we devote a special chapter below. For Mahāyānism is no more than the Buddhism of Bodhisattvas, while the Pratyekabuddhas and the Śrāvakas are considered by Mahāyānists to be adherents of Hīnayānism

The Mahāyāna Buddhism Defined

We can now form a somewhat definite notion as to what the Mahāyāna Buddhism is. It is the Buddhism which, inspired by a progressive spirit, broadened its original scope, so far as it did not contradict the inner significance of the teachings of the Buddha and which assimilated other religious philosophical beliefs within itself, whenever it felt that, by so doing, people of more widely different characters and intellectual endowments could be saved. Let us be satisfied at present with this statement until we enter into a more detailed exposition of its doctrinal peculiarities in the pages that follow.

It may not be out of place, while passing, to remark that the term Mahāyānism is used in this work merely in contradistinction to that form of Buddhism, which is flourishing in Ceylon and Burma and other central Asiatic nations, and whose literature is principally written in the language called Pāli, which comes from the same stock as Sanskrit. (The term 'Mahāyāna' does not imply, as it is used here, any sense of superiority over the Hinayāna. When the historical aspect of Mahāyānism is treated, it may naturally develop that its over zealous and one sided devotees unnecessarily emphasised its controversial and dogmatical phase at the sacrifice of its true spirit, but the reader must not think that this work has anything to do with those complications. In fact, Mahāyānism professes to be a boundless ocean in which all forms

of thought and faith can find its congenial and welcome home, why then should we make it militate against its own fellow-doctrine, Hinayânism?

2. IS THE MAHÂYÂNA BUDDHISM THE GENUINE TEACHING OF THE BUDDHA?

What is generally known to the Western nations by the name of Buddhism is Hinayânism, whose scriptures as above stated are written in Pâli and studied mostly in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam. It was through this language that the first knowledge of Buddhism was acquired by Orientalists, and naturally they came to regard Hinayânism or Southern Buddhism as the only genuine teachings of the Buddha. They insisted, and some of them still insist, that to have an adequate and thorough knowledge of Buddhism, they must confine themselves solely to the study of the Pâli, that whatever may be learned from other sources, i. e., from the Sanskrit, Tibetan, or Chinese documents should be considered as throwing only a side light on the reliable information obtained from the Pâli, and further that the knowledge derived from the former should in certain cases be discarded as accounts of a degenerated form of Buddhism. Owing to these unfortunate hypotheses the significance of Mahâyânism as a living religion has been entirely ignored, and even those who are regarded as best authorities on the subject appear greatly misinformed and, what is worse, altogether prejudiced.

No Life Without Growth

This is very unfair on the part of the critics, because what religion is there in the whole history of mankind that has not made any development whatever, that has remained the same, like the granite, throughout its entire course? Let us ask whether there is any religion which has shown some signs of vitality and yet retained its primitive form intact and unmodified in every respect. Is not changeableness, that is, susceptibility to irritation the most essential sign of vitality? Every organism grows, which means a change in some way or other. There is no form of life to be found anywhere on earth that does not grow or change, or that has not any inherent power of adjusting itself to the surrounding conditions.

Take, for example, Christianity. Is Protestantism the genuine teaching of Jesus of Nazareth? or does Catholicism represent his true spirit? Jesus himself did not have any definite notion of Trinity doctrine nor did he propose any suggestion for ritualism. According to the Synoptics, he appears to have cherished a rather immature conception of the kingdom of God than a purely ideal one as conceived by Paul and his personal disciples who were just as illiterate philosophically as the master himself were anxiously waiting in all probability for its mundane realisation. But what Christians, Catholics or Protestants in these days of enlightenment would dare

give a literal explanation to this material conception of the coming kingdom?

Again, think of Jesus's view on marriage and social life. Is it not an established fact that he highly advocated celibacy and in the case of married people strict continence, and also that he greatly favored pious poverty and asceticism in general? In these respects the monks of the Medieval Ages and the Catholic priests of the present day (though I cannot say they are ascetic and poor in their living) must be said to be in more accord with the teaching of the master than their Protestant brethren. But what Protestants would seriously venture to defend all those views of Jesus in spite of their avowed declaration that they are sincerely following in the steps of their Lord? Taking all in all these contradictions do not prevent them Protestants as well as Catholics from calling themselves Christians and even good, pious devoted Christians, as long as they are consciously or unconsciously animated by the same spirit, that was burning in the son of the carpenter of Nazareth an obscure village of Galilee, about two thousand years ago.

The same mode of reasoning holds good in the case of Mahayānism, and it would be absurd to insist on the genuineness of Hinayānism at the expense of the former. Take for granted that the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism contains some elements absorbed from other Indian religious philosophical systems, but what of it? Is not Christianity also an amalga-

tion, so to speak, of Jewish, Greek, Roman, Babylonian, Egyptian, and other pagan thoughts? In fact every healthy and energetic religion is historical, in the sense that, in the course of its development, it has adapted itself to the ever changing environment, and has assimilated within itself various elements which appeared at first even threatening its own existence. In Christianity, this process of assimilation, adaptation, and modification has been going on from its very beginning. As the result, we see in the Christianity of to-day its original type so metamorphosed, so far as its outward appearance is concerned, that nobody would now take it for a faithful copy of the prototype.

Mahâyânism a Living Faith

So with Mahâyânism. Whatever changes it has made during its historical evolution, its spirit and central ideas are all those of its founder. The question whether or not it is genuine, entirely depends on our interpretation of the term "genuine." If we take it to mean the lifeless preservation of the original, we should say that Mahâyânism is not the genuine teaching of the Buddha and we may add that Mahâyânists would be proud of the fact, because being a living religious force it would never condescend to be the corpse of a by gone faith. The fossils, however faithfully preserved, are nothing but rigid inorganic substances from which life is forever departed.

Mahâyânism is far from this, it is an ever growing faith and ready in all times to cast off its old garments as soon as they are worn out. But its spirit originally inspired by the "Teacher of Men and Gods" (*çâstadevamanusyanam*) is most jealously guarded against pollution and degeneration. Therefore, as far as its spirit is concerned, there is no room left to doubt its genuineness, and those who desire to have a complete survey of Buddhism cannot ignore the significance of Mahâyânism.

It is naught but an idle talk to question the historical value of an organism, which is now full of vitality and active in all its functions, and to treat it like an archeological object, dug out from the depths of the earth, or like a piece of *bric à brac*, discovered in the ruins of an ancient royal palace. Mahâyânism is not an object of historical curiosity. Its vitality and activity concern us in our daily life. It is a great spiritual organism, its moral and religious forces are still exercising an enormous power over millions of souls, and its further development is sure to be a very valuable contribution to the world progress of the religious consciousness. What does it matter, then, whether or not Mahâyânism is the genuine teaching of the Buddha?

Here is an instance of most flagrant contradictions present in our minds, but of which we are not conscious on account of our preconceived ideas. Christian critics vigorously insist on the genuineness of their own religion, which is no more than a

hybrid, at least outwardly, but they want to condemn their rival religion as denegerated, because it went through various stages of development like theirs. It is of no practical use to trouble with this nonsensical question, — the question of the genuineness of Mahâyânism, which by the way is frequently raised by outsiders as well as by some unenlightened Buddhists themselves.

3 SOME MISSTATEMENTS ABOUT THE MAHÂYÂNA DOCTRINES

Before entering fully into the subject proper of this work, let us glance over some erroneous opinions about the Mahâyâna doctrines, which are held by some Western scholars, and naturally by all uninitiated readers, who are like the blind led by the blind. It may not be altogether a superfluous work to give them a passing review in this chapter and to show broadly what Mahayânism is not.

Why Injustice is done to Buddhism.

The people who have had their thoughts and sentiments habitually trained by one particular set of religious dogmas, frequently misjudge the value of those thoughts that are strange and unfamiliar to them. We may call this class of people bigots or religious enthusiasts. They may have fine religious and moral sentiments as far as their own religious training goes, but, when examined from a broader point of view, they are to a great extent vitiated.

with prejudices, superstitions, and fanatical beliefs, which, since childhood, have been pumped into their receptive minds, before they were sufficiently developed and could form independent judgments. This fact so miserably spoils their purity of sentiment and obscures their transparency of intellect, that they are disqualified to perceive and appreciate whatever is good and true and beautiful in the so called heathen religions. This is the main reason why those Christian missionaries are incapable of rightly understanding the spirit of religion generally—I mean, those missionaries who come to the East to substitute one set of superstitions for another.

This strong general indictment against the Christian missionaries, however, is by no means prompted by any partisan spirit. My desire, on the contrary, is to do justice to those thoughts and sentiments that have been working consciously or unconsciously in the human mind from time immemorial and shall work on till the day of the last judgment, if there ever be such a day. To see what these thoughts and sentiments are, which, by the way, constitute the kernel of every religion, we must without any reluctance throw off all the prejudices we are liable to cherish, though quite unknowingly, and keeping always in view what is most essential in the religious consciousness, we must not confound it with its accessories, which are doomed to die in the course

Examples of Injustice

As specimen of injustice done to the Mahāyāna Buddhism by Christian critics, we quote the following passages from Monier-Williams's *Buddhism*, Waddell's *Buddhism in Tibet*, and Samuel Beal's *Buddhism in China*, all of which are representative works each in its own field.

Monier Monier-Williams

Monier Monier-Williams is a well known authority on Sanskrit literature, and his works in this department will long remain as a valuable contribution to human knowledge. But, unfortunately, as soon as he attempts to enter the domain of religious controversy, his intellect becomes pitiously obscured by his preconceived ideas. He thinks, for instance, that the principal feature of Mahāyānism consists merely in amplifying the number of Bodhisattvas, who are contented, according to his view, with their "perpetual residence in the heavens, and quite willing to put off all desires for Buddhahood and Parinirvana" (P. 190).

This remark is so absurd that it will at once be rejected by any one who has a first hand knowledge of the Mahāyāna system, as even unworthy of refutation, but Monier-Williams takes special pains to give to his characterisation of the Mahāyāna doctrine a show of rational explanation. "Of course," says he, "men instinctively recoiled from utter self-annihilation."

lation, and so the Buddha's followers ended in changing the true idea of Nirvana and converting it from a condition of non-existence into a state of lazy beatitude in celestial regions (I), while they encouraged all men — whether monks or laymen — to make a sense of dreamy bliss in Heaven (I), and not total extinction of life, the end of all their efforts" (P 156)

This view of the Buddhist heaven as interpreted by Monier-Williams is nothing but the conception of the Christian heaven colored with paganism. Nothing is more foreign to Buddhists than this distinguished Sankritist's interpretation of celestial existence. The life of devas (celestial beings) is just as much subject to the law of birth and death as that of men on earth. What consolation would there be for the Mahāyānists striving after the highest principle of existence, only to find themselves transmigrated to a celestial abode, that is also full of sorrows and sufferings? Always working for the welfare of their fellow-creatures, the Bodhisattvas never desire any earthly or heavenly happiness for themselves. Whatever merits, according to the law of karma, there be stored up for their good work, they do not have any wish to enjoy them by themselves, but they will have all these merits turned over (*parivarta*) to the interests of their fellow-beings. This is the ideal of Bodhisattvas, i e., of the followers of Mahāyānism.

Beal

Samuel Beal who is considered by Western scholars to be an authority on Chinese Buddhism, referring to the Mahāyāna conception of Dharmakāya, ¹ says in his *Buddhism in China* (p. 156) "We can have little doubt, then, that from early days worship was offered by Buddhists at several spots, consecrated by the presence of the Teacher, to an invisible presence. This presence was formulated by the later Buddhists under the phrase, 'the Body of the Law', Dharmakāya."

Then, alluding to Buddha's instruction that says after his Parinirvāna the Law given by him should be regarded as himself, Beal proceeds to say "Here was the germ from which proceeded the idea or formula of an invisible presence teaching and power of the Law (*Dharma*) represented the Dharmakāya or Law-Body of Buddha, present with the order, and fit for reverence."

To interpret Dharmakāya as the Body of the Law is quite inadequate and misleading. To the Hinayānists, there is nothing beside the Tripiṭaka as the object of reverence, and, therefore, the notion of the Body of the Law has no meaning to them. The idea

¹ The conception of Dharmakāya constitutes the central point in the system of Mahāyānism, and the right comprehension of it is of vital importance. The Body of the Law, as it is commonly rendered in English is not exact and leads frequently to a misconception of the entire system. The point is fully discussed below.

is distinctly Mahāyānist, but Beal is not well informed about its real significance as understood by the Buddhists. The chief reason of his misinterpretation, as I judge, lies in his rendering *dharma* by "law", while *dharma* here means "that which subsists," or "that which maintains itself even when all the transient modes disappear," in short, "being," or "substance." Dharmakāya, therefore, would be a sort of the Absolute, or Essence-Body of all things. This notion plays such an important rôle in Mahāyānism that an adequate knowledge of it is indispensable to understand the constitution of Mahāyānism as a religious system.

Waddell.

Let us state one more case of misrepresentation by Western scholars of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. Waddell, author of *Buddhism in Tibet*, referring to the point of divergence between the so-called Northern Buddhism and the Southern, says (pp. 10—11) "It was the theistic Mahāyāna doctrine which substituted, for the agnostic idealism and simple morality of Buddha, a speculative theistic system with a mysticism of sophistic nihilism in the background."

And again "This Mahāyāna [meaning Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika school] was essentially a sophistic nihilism, or rather Parinirvana, while ceasing to be extinction of life, was converted a mystic state which admitted of no definition."

It may not be wrong to call Mahāyānism a speculative theistic system in a wide sense, but it must be asked on what ground Waddell thinks that it has in its background "a mysticism of sophistic nihilism. Could a religious system be called sophistry when it makes a close inquiry into the science of dialectics, in order to show how futile it is to seek salvation through the intellect alone? Could a religious system be called a nihilism when it endeavors to reach the highest reality which transcends the phenomenality of concrete individual existences? Could a doctrine be called nihilistic when it defines the absolute as neither void (*śunya*) nor not void (*aśunya*)?

I could cull some more passages from other Buddhist scholars of the West and show how far Mahāyānism has been made by them a subject of misrepresentation. But since this work is not a polemic, but devoted to a positive exposition of its basic doctrines I refrain from so doing. Suffice it to state that one of the main causes of the injustice done to Buddhism by the Christian critics comes from their preconceptions, of which they may not be aware but which all the more vitiate their impartial judgments.

4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGION

Those misconceptions about Buddhism as above stated induce me to digress in this introductory part and to say a few words concerning the distinction

between the form and the spirit of religion. A clear knowledge of this distinction will greatly facilitate the formation of a correct notion about Mahâyânism and will also help us duly to appreciate its significance as a living religious faith.

By the spirit of religion I mean that element in religion which remains unchanged throughout its successive stages of development and transformation while the form of it is the external shell which is subject to any modification required by circumstances.

No Revealed Religion

It admits of no doubt that religion, as everything else under the sun, is subject to the laws of evolution, and that, therefore, there is no such thing as a revealed religion, whose teachings are supposed to have been delivered to us direct from the hands of an anthropomorphic or anthropopsychic supernatural being and which like an inorganic substance, remains forever the same, without changing without growing, without modifying itself in accord with the surrounding conditions. Unless people are so blinded by a belief in this kind of religion as to insist that its dogmas have suffered absolutely no change whatever since its "revelation," they must recognise like every clear-headed person the fact that there are some ephemeral elements in every religion, which must carefully be distinguished from its quintessence which remains eternally the same.

When this discrimination is not observed, prejudice

will at once assert itself, inducing them to imagine that the religion in which they were brought up with all its truths and superstitions is the only orthodox religion in the world, and all the other religions are nothing else than heathenism, idolatry, atheism, apostasy, and the like. This attitude of such religionists, however, serves only to betray their own narrowness of mind and dimness of spiritual insight. No one who desires to penetrate into the innermost recesses of the human heart and who longs to feel the fullest meaning of life, should foster in himself in the least degree a disposition of bigotry.

The Mystery

Religion is the inmost voice of the human heart that under the yoke of a seemingly finite existence groans and travails in pain. Mankind, from their first appearance on earth, have never been satisfied with the finiteness and impermanency of life. They have always been yearning after something that will liberate them from the slavery of this mortal coil, or from the cursed bondage of metempsychosis, as Hindu thinkers express it. This something, however, on account of its transcending all the principles of separation and individuation, which characterise the phenomena of this mundane existence, has always remained as something indefinite, inadequate, chaotic, and full of mystery. And according to different degrees of intellectual development in different ages and nations, people have endeavored to invest this

mysterious something with all sorts of human feelings and intelligence. Most of modern scientists are now content with the hypothesis that the mystery is unfathomable by the human mind, which is conditioned by the law of relativity, and that our business here, moral as well as intellectual, can be executed without troubling ourselves with this ever haunting problem of mystery, — this doctrine is called agnosticism.

But this hypothesis can in no wise be considered the final sentence passed on the mystery. From the scientific point of view, the maxim of agnosticism is excellent, as science does not pretend to venture into the realm of non-relativity. Dissatisfaction however presents itself, when we attempt to silence by this hypothesis the last demand of the human heart.

Intellect and Imagination

The human heart is not an intellectual crystal. When the intellect displays itself in its full glory, the heart still aches and struggles to get hold of something beyond. The intellect may sometimes declare that it has at last laid its hand on what is demanded by the heart. Time passes on and the mystery is examined from the other points that escaped consideration before and to the great disappointment of the heart the supposed solution is found to be wanting. The intellect is baffled. But the human heart never gets tired of its yearnings and demands a satisfaction ever more pressingly. Should they be considered a mere nightmare of imagination? Surely

not, for herein lies the field where religion claims supreme authority, and its claim is perfectly right.

But religion cannot fabricate whatever it pleases, it must work in perfect accord with the intellect. As the essential nature of man does not consist solely in intellect, or will, or feeling, but in the coördination of these psychical elements, religion must guard herself against the unrestrained flight of imagination. Most of the superstitions fondly cherished by a pious heart are due to the disregard of the intellectual element in religion.

The imagination creates the intellect discriminates. Creation without discrimination is wild discrimination without creation is barren. Religion and science, when they do not work with mutual understanding, are sure to be one sided. The soul makes an abnormal growth at one point, loses its balance, and is finally given up to a collapse of the entire system. Those pious religious enthusiasts who see a natural enemy in science and denounce it with all their energy, are, in my opinion, as purblind and distorted in their view, as those men of science who think that science alone must claim the whole field of soul activities as well as those of nature. I am not in sympathy with either of them for one is just as arrogant in its claim as the other. Without a careful examination of both sides of a shield, we are not competent to give a correct opinion upon it.

But the imagination is not the exclusive possession of religion, nor is discrimination or ratiocination the

monopoly of science. They are reciprocal and complementary: one cannot do anything without the other. The difference between science and religion is not that between certitude and probability. The difference is rather in their respective fields of activity. Science is solely concerned with things conditional, relative, and finite. When it explains a given phenomenon by some fixed laws which are in turn nothing but a generalisation of particular facts, the task of science is done, and any further attempt to go beyond this, i. e., to make an inquiry into the whence, whither, and why of things, is beyond its realm. But the human soul does not remain satisfied here; it asks for the ultimate principle underlying all so-called scientific laws and hypotheses. Science is indifferent to the teleology of things: a mechanical explanation of them appeases its intellectual curiosity. But in religion teleology is of paramount importance; it is one of the most fundamental problems, and a system which does not give any definite conception on this point is no religion. Science, again, does not care if there is something beyond or outside its manifold laws and theories, but a religion which does not possess a God or anything corresponding to it, ceases to be so, for it fails to give consolation to the human heart.

The Contents of Faith vary

The solution of religious problems, as far as they fall within the sphere of relative experience, is large-

ly a matter of personal conviction, determined by one's intellectual development, external circumstances, education, disposition, etc. The conceptions of faith thus formulated are naturally infinitely diversified, even among the followers of a certain definite set of dogmas, each will understand them in his own way, owing to individual peculiarities. If we could subject their conceptions of faith to a strict analysis as a chemist does his materials, we should detect in them all the possible forms of differentiation. But all these things belong to the exterior of religion and have nothing to do with the essentials which underlie them.

The abiding elements of religion come from within, and consist mainly in the mysterious sentiment that lies hidden in the deepest depths of the human heart, and that, when awakened, shakes the whole structure of personality and brings about a great spiritual revolution, which results in a complete change of one's world conception. When this mysterious sentiment finds expression and formulates its conceptions in the terms of intellect, it becomes a definite system of beliefs, which is popularly called religion, but which should properly be termed dogmatism, that is, an intellectualised form of religion. On the other hand, the outward forms of religion consist of those changing elements that are mainly determined by the intellectual and moral development of the times as well as by individual esthetical feelings.

True Christians and enlightened Buddhists may, therefore, find their point of agreement in the recog-

my Christian readers sincerely to take up the study of a religious system other than their own, I now proceed to a systematical elucidation of the Mahāyāna Buddhism, as it is believed at present in the Far East

CHAPTER I

A GENERAL CHARACTERISATION OF BUDDHISM.

No God and no Soul

BUDDHISM is considered by some to be a religion without a God and without a soul. The statement is true and untrue according to what meaning we give to those terms.

Buddhism does not recognise the existence of a being, who stands aloof from his "creations, and who meddles occasionally with human affairs when his capricious will pleases him. This conception of a supreme being is very offensive to Buddhists. They are unable to perceive any truth in the hypotheses, that a being like ourselves created the universe out of nothing and first peopled it with a pair of sentient beings, that, owing to a crime committed by them, which, however, could have been avoided if the creator so desired, they were condemned by him to eternal damnation, that the creator in the meantime, feeling pity for the cursed, or suffering the bite of remorse for his somewhat rash deed, despatched his only beloved son to the earth for the purpose of rescuing mankind from universal misery, etc., etc. If Buddhism is called atheism on account of its

refusal to take poetry for actual fact, its followers would have no objection to the designation

Next, if we understand by soul *âtman*, which, secretly hiding itself behind all mental activities, direct them after the fashion of an organist striking different notes as he pleases, Buddhists outspokenly deny the existence of such a fabulous being. To postulate an independent *âtman* outside a combination of the five *Skandhas*¹, of which an individual being is supposed by Buddhists to consist, is to unreservedly welcome egoism with all its pernicious corollaries. And what distinguishes Buddhism most characteristically and emphatically from all other religions is the doctrine of non *âtman* or non ego, exactly opposite to the postulate of a soul substance which is cherished by most of religious enthusiasts. In this sense, Buddhism is undoubtedly a religion without the soul.

To make these points clearer in a general way, let us briefly treat in this chapter of such principal tenets of Buddhism as Karma, *Atman*, *Avidyâ*, *Nirvâna*, *Dharmakâya* etc. Some of these doctrines being the common property of the two schools of Buddhism, *Hinayânism* and *Mahâyânism*, their brief, comprehensive exposition here will furnish our readers with a general notion about the constitution of Buddhism, and will also prepare them to pursue a further specific exposition of the *Mahâyâna* doctrine which follows.

¹ They are (1) form or materiality (*rûpa*) (2) sensation (*vedanâ*) (3) conception (*samjñâ*) (4) action or deeds (*samkâra*) and (5) consciousness (*vyvânâ*). These terms are explained elsewhere.

Karma.

One of the most fundamental doctrines established by Buddha is that nothing in this world comes from a single cause, that the existence of a universe is the result of a combination of several causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*pratyaya*), and is at the same time an active force contributing to the production of an effect in the future. As far as phenomenal existences are concerned, this law of cause and effect holds universally valid. Nothing, even God, can interfere with the course of things thus regulated, materially as well as morally. If a God really exists and has some concern about our worldly affairs, he must first conform himself to the law of causation. Because the principle of karma, which is the Buddhist term for causation morally conceived, holds supreme everywhere and all the time.

The conception of karma plays the most important rôle in Buddhist ethics. Karma is the formative principle of the universe. It determines the course of events and the destiny of our existence. The reason why we cannot change our present state of things as we may will, is that it has already been determined by the karma that was performed in our previous lives, not only individually but collectively. But, for this same reason, we shall be able to work out our destiny in the future, which is nothing but the resultant of several factors that are working and that are being worked by ourselves in this life.

Therefore, says Buddha

' By self alone is evil done,
By self is one disgraced,
By self is evil left undone
By self alone is he purified,
Purity and impurity belong to self
No one can purify another ' 1

Again,

' Not in the sky
Nor in the midst of the sea
Nor entering a cleft of the mountains
Is found that realm on earth
Where one may stand and be
From an evil deed absolved ' 2

This doctrine of karma may be regarded as an application in our ethical realm of the theory of the conservation of energy. Everything done is done once for all, its footprints on the sand of our moral and social evolution are forever left, nay, more than left, they are generative, good or evil, and waiting for further development under favorable conditions. In the physical world, even the slightest possible movement of our limbs cannot but affect the general cosmic motion of the earth however infinitesimal it be, and if we had a proper instrument, we could surely measure its precise extent of effect. So is it even with our deeds. A deed once performed together with its subjective motives, can never vanish without leaving some impressions either on the individual³

¹ *The Dhammapada*, v 165 Tr by A J Edmunds .

² *The Dhammapada* v 127

consciousness or on the supra individual, i e, social consciousness

We need not further state that the conception of karma in its general aspect is scientifically verified. In our moral and material life, where the law of relativity rules supreme, the doctrine of karma must be considered thoroughly valid. And as long as its validity is admitted in this field, we can live our phenomenal life without resorting to the hypothesis of a personal God, as declared by Lamarck when his significant work on evolution was presented to Emperor Napoleon.

But it will do injustice to Buddhism if we designate it agnosticism or naturalism, denying or ignoring the existence of the ultimate, unifying principle, in which all contradictions are obliterated. Dharmakāya is the name given by Buddhists to this highest principle, viewed not only from the philosophical but also from the religious standpoint. In the Dharmakāya, Buddhists find the ultimate significance of life, which, when seen from its phenomenal aspect, cannot escape the bondage of karma and its irrefragable laws.

Avidyā

What claims our attention next, is the problem of nescience, which is one of the most essential features of Buddhism. Buddhists think, nescience (in Sanskrit *avidyā*) is the subjective aspect of karma, involving us in a series of rebirths. Rebirth, considered by itself, is no moral evil, but rather a necessary

condition of progress toward perfection, if perfection ever be attainable here. It is an evil only when it is the outcome of ignorance, — ignorance as to the true meaning of our earthly existence.

Ignorant are they who do not recognise the evanescence of wordly things and who tenaciously cleave to them as final realities; who madly struggle to shun the misery brought about by their own folly; who savagely cling to the self against the will of God, as Christians would say; who take particulars as final existences and ignore one pervading reality which underlies them all; who build up an adamant wall between the mine and thine: in a word, ignorant are those who do not understand that there is no such thing as an ego-soul, and that all individual existences are unified in the system of Dharma-kāya Buddhism, therefore, most emphatically maintains that to attain the bliss of Nirvana we must radically dispel this illusion, this ignorance, this root of all evil and suffering in this life

The doctrine of nescience or ignorance is technically expressed in the following formula, which is commonly called the Twelve Nidānas or Pratyayasamutpada, that is to say Chains of Dependence:

- (1) There is Ignorance (*avidyā*) in the beginning,
- (2) from Ignorance Action (*sanskāra*) comes forth;
- (3) from Action Consciousness (*viññāna*) comes forth;
- (4) from Consciousness Name-and-Form (*nāmarūpa*) comes forth,
- (5) from Name-and-Form the Six Organs (*sadāyātana*) come forth,
- (6) from the Six Organs

Touch (*sparga*) comes forth, (7) from Touch Sensation (*vedanā*) comes forth, (8) from Sensation Desire (*trṣṇa*) comes forth, (9) from Desire Clinging (*upā-dāna*) comes forth, (10) from Clinging Being (*bhāva*) comes forth, (11) from Being Birth (*jati*) comes forth, and (12) from Birth Pain (*dukkha*) comes forth

According to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, the formula is explained as follows. Being ignorant in our previous life as to the significance of our existence, we let loose our desires and act wantonly. Owing to this karma, we are destined in the present life to be endowed with consciousness (*viññāna*), name and form (*nāmarūpa*), the six organs of sense (*sadāyātana*), and sensation (*vedana*). By the exercise of these faculties, we now desire for, hanker after, cling to, these illusive existences which have no ultimate reality whatever. In consequence of this "Will to Live" we potentially accumulate or make up the karma that will lead us to further metempsychosis of birth and death.

The formula is by no means logical, nor is it exhaustive, but the fundamental notion that life started in ignorance or blind will remains veritable.

Non-Atman

The problem of nescience naturally leads to the doctrine usually known as that of non-Atman, i. e., non-ego, to which allusion was made at the beginning

of this chapter This doctrine of Buddhism is one of the subjects that have caused much criticism by Christian scholars Its thesis runs There is no such thing as ego soul, which, according to the vulgar interpretation, is the agent of our mental activities And this is the reason why Buddhism is sometimes called a religion without the soul, as aforesaid

This Buddhist negation of the ego soul is perhaps startling to the people, who, having no speculative power, blindly accept the traditional, materialistic view of the soul They think, they are very spiritual in endorsing the dualism of soul and flesh, and in making the soul something like a corporeal entity, though far more ethereal than an ordinary object of the senses They think of the soul as being more in the form of an angel, when they teach that it ascends to heaven immediately after its release from the material imprisonment

They further imagine that the soul, because of its imprisonment in the body, groans in pain for its liberty, not being able to bear its mundane limitations The immortality of the soul is a continuation after the dismemberment of material elements of this ethereal, astral ghost like entity,—very much resembling the Samkhyan *Lingham* or the Vedantic *sūksama-çarita* Self consciousness will not a whit suffer in its continued activity, as it is the essential function of the soul Brothers and sisters, parents, and sons and daughters, wives and husbands, all transfigured and sublimated, will meet again in the

celestial abode, and perpetuate their home life much after the manner of their earthly one. People who take this view of the soul and its immortality must feel a great disappointment or even resentment, when they are asked to recognise the Buddhist theory of non *âtman*

The absurdity of ascribing to the soul a sort of astral existence taught by some theosophists is due to the confusion of the name and the object corresponding to it. The soul, or what is tantamount according to the vulgar notion, the ego, is a name given to a certain coördination of mental activities. Abstract names are invented by us to economise our intellectual labors, and of course have no corresponding realities as particular presences in the concrete objective world. Vulgar minds have forgotten the history of the formation of abstract names. Being accustomed always to find certain objective realities or concrete individuals answering to certain names, they—those naive realists—imagine that all names, irrespective of their nature, must have their concrete individual equivalents in the sensual world. Their idealism or spiritualism, so called is in fact a gross form of materialism, in spite of their unfounded fear for the latter as atheistic and even immoral,—curse of ignorance!

The non *âtman* theory does not deny that there is a coordination or unification of various mental operations. Buddhism calls this system of coordination *vijnâna*, not *âtman*. *Vijnâna* is consciousness, while

Ātman is the ego conceived as a concrete entity,—a hypostatic agent which, abiding in the deepest recess of the mind, directs all subjective activities according to its own discretion. This view is radically rejected by Buddhism.

A familiar analogy illustrating the doctrine of non-ātman is the notion of a wheel or that of a house. Wheel is the name given to a combination in a fixed form of the spokes, axle, tire, hub, rim, etc., house is that given to a combination of roofs, pillars, windows, floors, walls, etc., after a certain model and for a certain purpose. Now, take all these parts independently, and where is the house or the wheel to be found? House or wheel is merely the name designating a certain form in which parts are systematically and definitely disposed. What an absurdity, then, it must be to insist on the independent existence of the wheel or of the house as an agent behind the combination of certain parts thus definitely arranged!

It is wonderful that Buddhism clearly anticipated the outcome of modern psychological researches at the time when all other religious and philosophical systems were eagerly cherishing dogmatic superstitions concerning the nature of the ego. The refusal of modern psychology to have soul mean anything more than the sum total of all mental experiences, such as sensations, ideas, feelings, decisions, etc., is precisely a rehearsal of the Buddhist doctrine of non-ātman. It does not deny that there is a unity of consciousness.

for to deny this is to doubt our everyday experiences, but it refuses to assert that this unity is absolute, unconditioned, and independent. Everything in this phenomenal phase of existence, is a combination of certain causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*pratyaya*) brought together according to the principle of karma, and everything that is compound is finite and subject to dissolution, and, therefore always limited by something else. Even the soul life, as far as its phenomenality goes is no exception to this universal law. To maintain the existence of a soul substance which is supposed to lie hidden behind the phenomena of consciousness, is not only misleading but harmful and productive of some morally dangerous conclusions. The supposition that there is something where there is really nothing makes us cling to this chimerical form with no other result than subjecting ourselves to an eternal series of sufferings. So we read in the *Lankavatara Sûtra* III

A flower in the air or a hare with horns
Or a pregnant maid of stone
To take what is not for what is
Tis called a judgment false

In a combination of causes
The vulgar seek the reality of self
As truth they understand not
From birth to birth they transmigrate

The Non-Atmaness of Things

Mahâyânism has gone a step further than Hīnayānism in the development of the doctrine of non-ātman, for it expressly disavows besides the denial

of the existence of the ego substance, a noumenal conception of things, i. e., the conception of particulars as having something absolute in them. Hinayānism, indeed, also disfavours this conception of thingness, but it does so only implicitly. It is Mahāyānism that definitely insists on the non existence of a personal (*pudgala*) as well as a thingish (*dharmā*) ego.

According to the vulgar view, particular existences are real, they have permanent substantial entities remaining forever as such. They think therefore, that organic matter remains forever organic just as much as inorganic matter remains inorganic, that, as they are essentially different, there is no mutual transformation between them. The human soul is different from that of the lower animals and sentient beings from non-sentient beings, the difference being well defined and permanent, there is no bridge over which one can cross to the other. We may call this view naturalistic egoism.

Mahāyānism, against this egoistic conception of the world extends its theory of non ātman to the realm lying outside us. It maintains that there is no irreducible reality in particular existences so long as they are combinations of several causes and conditions brought together by the principle of karma. Things are here because they are sustained by karma. As soon as its force is exhausted, the conditions that made their existence possible lose efficiency and dissolve, and in their places will follow other conditions and existences. Therefore, what is organic

to-day, may be inorganic to-morrow, and *vice versa* Carbon, for instance which is stored within the earth appears in the form of coal or graphite or diamond, but that which exists on its surface is found some times combined with other elements in the form of an animal or a vegetable, sometimes in its free elementary state It is the same carbon everywhere, it becomes inorganic or organic, according to its karma, it has no *âtman* in itself which directs its transformation by its own self determining will Mutual transformation is everywhere observable there is a constant shifting of forces an eternal transmigration of the elements,—all of which tend to show the transitoriness and non *âtman* ness of individual existences The universe is moving like a whirl wind nothing in it proving to be stationary nothing in it rigidly adhering to its own form of existence

Suppose on the other hand there were an *âtman* behind every particular being suppose too it were absolute and permanent and self acting and this phenomenal world would then come to a standstill, and life be forever gone For is not changeability the most essential feature and condition of life and also the strongest evidence for the non existence of individual things as realities? The physical sciences recognise this universal fact of mutual transformation in its positive aspect and call it the law of the conservation of energy and of matter Mahâyânism, recognising its negative side, proposes the doctrine of the non *âtman* ness of things, that is to say, the

impermanency of all particular existences. Therefore, it is said, "*Sarvam anityam, sarvam śūnyam, sarvam anātman.*" (All is transitory, all is void, all is without ego)

Mahāyānists condemn the vulgar view that denies the consubstantiality and reciprocal transformation of all beings, not only because it is scientifically untenable, but mainly because, ethically and religiously considered, it is fraught with extremely dangerous ideas, — ideas which finally may lead a 'brother to deliver up the brother to death and the father the child,' and, again, it may constrain "the children to rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death." Why? Because this view, born of egoism, would dry up the well of human love and sympathy, and transform us into creatures of bestial selfishness, because this view is not capable of inspiring us with the sense of mutuality and commiseration and of making us disinterestedly feel for our fellow beings. Then, all fine religious and humane sentiments would depart from our hearts, and we should be nothing less than rigid lifeless corpses, no pulse beating no blood running. And how many victims are offered every day on this altar of egoism! They are not necessarily immoral by nature but blindly led by the false conception of life and the world, they have been rendered incapable of seeing their own spiritual doubles in their neighbors. Being ever controlled by their sensual impulses, they sin against humanity, against nature, and against themselves.

We read in the *Mahâyâna-abhisamaya Sûtra*
(Nanjo, no 196)

'Empty and calm and devoid of ego
Is the nature of all things
There is no individual being
That in reality exists

'Nor end nor beginning having
Nor any middle course,
All is a sham, here's no reality whatever
It is like unto a vision and a dream

'It is like unto clouds and lightning
It is like unto gossamer or bubbles floating
It is like unto fiery revolving wheel,
It is like unto water splashing

'Because of causes and conditions things are here
In them there's no self nature [i.e., âtman]
All things that move and work,
Know them as such

Ignorance and thirsty desire
The source of birth and death they are
Right contemplation and discipline by heart,
Desire and ignorance obliterate

'All beings in the world
Beyond words they are and expressions
Their ultimate nature pure and true,
Is like unto vacuity of space'

The Dharmakaya

The Dharmakâya, which literally means "body or system of being," is, according to the Mahâyânists,

'This last passage should not be understood in the sense of a total abnegation of existence. It means simply the transcendence of the highest principle.

the ultimate reality that underlies all particular phenomena, it is that which makes the existence of individuals possible, it is the *raison d'être* of the universe, it is the norm of being, which regulates the course of events and thoughts. The conception of Dharmakāya is peculiarly Mahāyānist, for the Hinayāna school did not go so far as to formulate the ultimate principle of the universe, its adherents stopped short at a positivistic interpretation of Buddhism. The Dharmakāya remained for them to be the Body of the Law, or the Buddha's personality as embodied in the truth taught by him.

The Dharmakāya may be compared in one sense to the God of Christianity and in another sense to the Brahman or Paramātman of Vedantism. It is different, however, from the former in that it does not stand transcendently above the universe, which, according to the Christian view, was created by God, but which is, according to Mahāyānism, a manifestation of the Dharmakāya himself. It is also different from Brahman in that it is not absolutely impersonal, nor is it a mere being. The Dharmakāya, on the contrary, is capable of willing and reflecting, or, to use Buddhist phraseology, it is *Karunā* (love) and *Bodhi* (intelligence), and not the mere state of being.

This pantheistic and at the same time theistic Dharmakāya is working in every sentient being, for sentient beings are nothing but a self-manifestation of the Dharmakāya. Individuals are not isolated existences, as imagined by most people. ✱ isolated,

they are nothing, they are so many soap-bubbles which vanish one after another in the vacuity of space. All particular existences acquire their meaning only when they are thought of in their oneness in the Dharmakāya The veil of Māya, i. e., subjective ignorance may temporarily throw an obstacle to our perceiving the universal light of Dharmakāya, in which we are all one But when our Bodhi or intellect, which is by the way a reflection of the Dharmakāya in the human mind, is so fully enlightened, we no more build the artificial barrier of egoism before our spiritual eye, the distinction between the *meum* and *teum* is obliterated, no dualism throws the nets of entanglement over us, I recognise myself in you and you recognise yourself in me, *tat tvam asi* Or,

"What is here, that is there,
What is there, that is here
Who sees duality here,
From death to death goes he "

This state of enlightenment may be called the spiritual expansion of the ego, or, negatively, the ideal annihilation of the ego. A never-drying stream of sympathy and love which is the life of religion will now spontaneously flow out of the fountain-head of Dharmakāya.

The doctrine of non-ego teaches us that there is no reality in individual existences, that we do not have any transcendental entity called ego substance.

The doctrine of Dharmakāya, to supplement this, teaches us that we all are one in the System of Being and only as such are immortal. The one shows us the folly of clinging to individual existences and of coveting the immortality of the ego soul, the other convinces us of the truth that we are saved by living into the unity of Dharmakāya. The doctrine of non ātman liberates us from the shackle of unfounded egoism, but as mere liberation does not mean anything positive and may perchance lead us to asceticism, we apply the energy thus released to the execution of the will of Dharmakāya.

The questions "Why have we to love our neighbors as ourselves? Why have we to do to others all things whatsoever we would that they should do to us?" are answered thus by Buddhists: "It is because we are all one in the Dharmakāya, because when the clouds of ignorance and egoism are totally dispersed, the light of universal love and intelligence cannot help but shine in all its glory. And, enveloped in this glory, we do not see any enemy, nor neighbor, we are not even conscious of whether we are one in the Dharmakāya. There is no 'my will' here, but only 'thy will, the will of Dharmakāya, in which we live and move and have our being."

The Apostle Paul says: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Why? Buddhists would answer, "because Adam asserted his egoism in giving himself up to ignorance, (the tree of knowledge is in truth the tree of ignorance,"

for from it comes the duality of me and thee), while Christ on the contrary surrendered his egoistic assertion to the intelligence of the universal Dharmakaya. That is why we die in the former and are made alive in the latter.

Nirvâna

The meaning of Nirvâna has been variously interpreted by non Buddhist students from the philological and the historical standpoint, but it matters little what conclusions they have reached as we are not going to recapitulate them here, nor do they at all affect our presentation of the Buddhists own view as below. For it is the latter that concerns us here most and constitutes the all important part of the problem. We have had too much of non Buddhist speculation on the question at issue. The majority of the critics while claiming to be fair and impartial, have, by some preconceived ideas, been led to a conclusion, which is not at all acceptable to intelligent Buddhists. Further, the fact has escaped their notice that Pâli literature from which they chiefly derive their information on the subject represents the views of one of the many sects that arose soon after the demise of the Master and were constantly branching off at and after the time of King Açoka. The probability is, that Buddha himself did not have any stereotyped conception of Nirvana, and, as most great minds do, expressed his ideas outright as formed under various circumstances, though of course they could not be

in contradiction with his central beliefs, which must have remained the same throughout the course of his religious life. Therefore, to understand a problem in all its apparently contradictory aspects, it is very necessary to grasp at the start the spirit of the author of the problem, and when this is done the rest will be understood comparatively much easier. Non Buddhist critics lack in this most important qualification, therefore, it is no wonder that Buddhists themselves are always reluctant to accede to their interpretations.

Enough for apology Nirvāna, according to Buddhists, does not signify an annihilation of consciousness nor a temporal or permanent suppression of mentation¹, as imagined by some, but it is the

¹ Guyau, a French sociologist refers to the Buddhist conception of Nirvāna in his *Non Religion of the Future*. I take his interpretation as typical of those non Buddhist critics who are very little acquainted with the subject but pretend to know much (English translation, pp 472—474)

Granted the wretchedness of life, the remedy that pessimists propose is the new religious salvation that modern Buddhists are to make fashionable. The conception is that of Nirvāna. To sever all the ties which attach you to the external world, to prune away all the young offshoots of desire, and recognise that to be rid of them is a deliverance, to practise a sort of complete psychical circumcision to recoil upon yourself and to believe that by so doing you enter into the society of the great totality of things (the mystic would say of God), to create an inner vacuum and to feel dizzy in the void and nevertheless, to believe that the void is plenitude supreme, pleroma, these have always constituted temptations to mankind. Mankind has been tempted to meddle with them as it has been tempted to creep up to

annihilation of the notion of ego substance and of all the desires that arise from this erroneous conception. But this represents the negative side of the doctrine, and its positive side consists in universal love or sympathy (*karunā*) for all beings

These two aspects of Nirvāna, i.e., negatively, the destruction of evil passions, and, positively, the practice of sympathy, are complementary to each other, and when we have one we have the other. Because, as soon as the heart is freed from the cangue of egoism, the same heart, hitherto so cold and hard, undergoes a complete change, shows animation, and, joyously escaping from self-imprisonment, finds its freedom in the bosom of Dharmakāya. In this latter sense, Nirvāna is the "humanisation of Dharmakāya, that is to say, "God's will done in earth as it is in heaven" If we make use of the

the verge of dizzy precipices and look over Nirvāna leads, in fact, to the annihilation of the individual and of the race, and to the logical absurdity that the vanquished are the victors over the trials and miseries of life.

Then the author recites the case of one of his acquaintances who made a practical experiment of Nirvāna rejecting variety in his diet, giving up meat, wine, every kind of ragout, every form of condiment, and reducing to its lowest possible terms the desire that is most fundamental in every living being—the desire of food, and substituting a certain number of cups of pure milk. 'Having thus blunted his sense of taste and the grosser of his appetites, having abandoned all physical activity, he thought to find a recompense in the pleasure of abstract meditation and of esthetic contemplation. He entered to a state which was not that of dreamland, but neither was it that of real life, with its definite details.'

terms, subjective and objective Nirvāna is the former,¹ and the Dharmakāya is the latter, phase of one and the same principle. Again, psychologically, Nirvāna is enlightenment, the actualisation of the Bodhicitta² (Heart of Intelligence)

The gospel of love and the doctrine of Nirvāna may appear to some to contradict each other, for they think that the former is the source of energy and activity, while the latter is a lifeless, inhuman, ascetic quietism. But the truth is, love is the emotional aspect and Nirvāna the intellectual aspect of the inmost religious consciousness which constitutes the essence of the Buddhist life.

That Nirvāna is the destruction of selfish desires is plainly shown in this stanza

'To the giver merit is increased,
When the senses are controlled anger arises not,
The wise forsake evil,
By the destruction of desire sin and infatuation
A man attains to Nirvāna.'³

The following which was breathed forth by Buddha against a certain class of monks, testifies that when Nirvāna is understood in the sense of quietism or pessimism, he vigorously repudiated it

"Fearing an endless chain of birth and death
And the misery of transmigration
Their heart is filled with worry
But they desire their safety only

¹ For detailed explanation of this term see Chapter XI.

² *The Udāna* Ch VIII, p 118 Translation by General Strong

'Quietly sitting and reckoning the breaths,
They're bent on the Anâpânam ¹
They contemplate on the filthiness of the body, —
Thinking how impure it is!

They shun the dust of the triple world,
And in ascetic practise their safety they seek
Incapable of love and sympathy are they,
For on Nirvâna abides their thought' ²

' Against this ascetic practise of some monks, the
Buddha sets forth what might be called the ideal of
the Buddhist life

"Arouse thy will supreme and great
Practise love and sympathy, give joy and protection,
Thy love like unto space,
Be it without discrimination, without limitation

Merits establish, not for thy own sake,
But for charity universal,
Save and deliver all beings,
Let them attain the wisdom of the Great Way'

It is apparent that the ethical application of the
doctrine of Nirvâna is naught else than the Golden

¹ This is a peculiarly Indian religious practice, which consists in counting one's exhaling and inhaling breaths. When a man is intensely bent on the practise, he gradually passes to a state of trance forgetting everything that is going on around and within himself. The practise may have the merit of alleviating nervousness and giving to the mind the bliss of relaxation, but it oftentimes leads the mind to a self-hypnotic state.

² Here Nirvâna is evidently understood to mean self-abnegation or world-flight or quietism, which is not in accord with the true Buddhist interpretation of the term.

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Rule,¹ so called The Golden Rule, however, does not give any reason why we should so act, it is a mere command whose authority is ascribed to a certain superhuman being. This does not satisfy an intellectually disposed mind, which refuses to accept anything on mere authority, for it wants to go to the bottom of things and see on what ground they are standing. Buddhism has solved this problem by finding the oneness of things in Dharmakâya, from which flows the eternal stream of love and sympathy. As we have seen before, when the cursed barrier of egoism is broken down, there remains nothing that can prevent us from loving others as ourselves.

Those who wish to see nothing but an utter barrenness of heart after the annihilation of egoism, are much mistaken in their estimation of human nature. For they think its animation comes from selfishness, and that all forms of activity in our life are propelled simply by the desire to preserve self and the race. They, therefore, naturally shrink from the doctrine that teaches that all things worldly are empty, and that there is no such thing as ego substance whose

¹ The sentiment of the Golden Rule is not the monopoly of Christianity it has been expressed by most of the leaders of thought, thus, for instance. Requite hatred with virtue. (Lao tze) Hate is only appeased by love (Buddha) 'Do not do to others what ye would not have done to you by others' (Confucius). One must neither return evil, nor do any evil to any one among men not even if one has to suffer from them (Plato *Crito*, 49) ✓

immortality is so much coveted by most people. But the truth is, the spring of love does not lie in the idea of self, but in its removal. For the human heart, being a reflection of the Dharmakāya which is love and intelligence, recovers its intrinsic power and goodness, only when the veil of ignorance and egoism is cast aside. The animation, energy, strenuousness, which were shown by a self-centered will, and which therefore were utterly despicable, will not surely die out with the removal of their odious atmosphere in which egoism had enveloped them. But they will gain an ever nobler interpretation, ever more elevating and satisfying significance, for they have gone through a baptism of fire, by which the last trace of egoism has been thoroughly consumed. The old evil master is eternally buried, but the willing servants are still here and ever ready to do their service now more efficiently, for their new legitimate and more authoritative lord.

Destruction is in common parlance closely associated with nothingness, hence Nirvāna, the destruction of egoism, is ordinarily understood as a synonym of nihilism. But the removal of darkness does not bring desolation, but means enlightenment and order and peace. It is the same chamber, all the furniture is left there as it was before. In darkness chaos reigned, goblins walked wild. In enlightenment everything is in its proper place. And did we not state plainly that Nirvāna was enlightenment?

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The Intellectual Tendency of Buddhism.

One thing which in this connection I wish to refer to, is what makes Buddhism appear somehow cold and impassive. By this I mean its intellectuality.

The fact is that anything coming from India greatly savors of philosophy. In ancient India everybody of the higher castes seems to have indulged in intellectual and speculative exercises. Being rich in natural resources and thus the struggle for existence being reduced to a minimum, the Brahmans and the Ksatriyas gathered themselves under most luxuriously growing trees, or retired to the mountain-grottoes undisturbed by the hurly burly of the world, and there they devoted all their leisure hours to metaphysical speculations and discussions. Buddhism, as a product of these people, is naturally deeply imbued with intellectualism.

Further, in India there was no distinction between religion and philosophy. Every philosophical system was at the same time a religion, and *vice versa*. Philosophy with the Hindus was not an idle display of logical subtlety which generally ends in entangling itself in the meshes of sophistry. Their aim of philosophising was to have an intellectual insight into the significance of existence and the destiny of humanity. They did not believe in anything blindly nor accept anything on mere tradition. Buddha most characteristically echoes this sentiment when he says, "Follow my teachings not as taught by a Buddha, but as .

being in accord with truth " This spirit of self-reliance and self salvation later became singularly Buddhistic. Even when Buddha was still merely an enthusiastic aspirant for Nirvāna, he seems to have been strongly possessed of this spirit, for he most emphatically declared the following famous passage, in response to the pathetic persuasion of his father's ministers, who wanted him to come home with them ' The doubt whether there exists anything or not, is not to be settled for me by another's words. Arriving at the truth either by mortification or by tranquilisation, I will grasp myself whatever is ascertainable about it. It is not mine to receive a view which is full of conflicts, uncertainties, and contradictions. What enlightened men would go by other's faith? The multitudes are like the blind led in the darkness by the blind ' ¹

To say simply, "Love your enemy," was not satisfactory to the Hindu mind, it wanted to see the reason why. And as soon as the people were convinced intellectually, they went even so far as to defend the faith with their lives. It was not an uncommon event that before a party of Hindu philosophers entered into a discussion they made an agreement that the penalty of defeats should be the sacrifice of the life. They were, above all, a people of intellect, though of course not lacking in religious sentiment.

It is no wonder, then, that Buddha did not make the first proclamation of his message by "Repent, for

¹ *The Buddhacarita*, Book IX, 63-64

the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' but by the establishment of the Four Noble Truths ¹ One appeals to the feeling, and the other to the intellect That which appeals to the intellect naturally seems to be less passionate, but the truth is, feeling without the support of intellect leads to fanaticism and is always ready to yield itself to bigotry and superstition

The doctrine of Nirvāna is doubtless more intellectual than the Christian gospel of love It first recognises the wretchedness of human life as is proved by our daily experiences, it then finds its cause in our subjective ignorance as to the true meaning of existence, and in our egocentric desires which, obscuring our spiritual insight, make us tenaciously cling to things chimerical, it then proposes the complete annihilation of egoism the root of all evil, by which, subjectively, tranquillity of heart is restored, and, objectively, the realisation of universal love becomes possible Buddhism, thus, proceeds most logically in the development of its doctrine of Nirvāna and universal love

Says Victor Hugo (*Les Misérables*, vol II) "The reduction of the universe to a single being, the expansion of a single being even to God, this is love" When a man clings to the self and does not want

¹ According to one Northern Buddhist tradition, Buddha is recorded to have exclaimed at the time of his supreme spiritual beatitude Wonderful! All sentient beings are universally endowed with the intelligence and virtue of the Tathāgata!

to identify himself with other fellow selves, he cannot expand his being to God. When he shuts himself in the narrow shell of ego and keeps all the world outside, he cannot reduce the universe to his innermost self. To love, therefore, one must first enter Nirvâna.

The truth is everywhere the same and is attained through the removal of ignorance. But as individual disposition differs according to the previous karma, some are more prone to intellectualism, while the others to sentimentality (in its psychological sense). Let us then follow our own inclination conscientiously and not speak evil of others. This is called the Doctrine of Middle Path.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL CHARACTERISATION OF MAHĀYĀNISM

WE are now in a position to enter into a specific exposition of the Mahāyāna doctrine. But, before doing so, it will be well for us first to consider the views that were held by the Hindu Buddhist thinkers concerning its characteristic features; in other words, to make an historical survey of its peculiarities.

As stated in the Introduction, the term Mahāyāna was invented in the times of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva (about the third or fourth century after Christ), when doctrinal struggles between the Çrāvaka and the Bodhisattva classes reached a climax. The progressive Hindu Buddhists, desiring to announce the essential features of their doctrine, did so naturally at the expense of their rival and by pointing out why theirs was greater than, or superior to, Hinayānism. Their views were thus necessarily vitiated by a partisan spirit, and instead of impartially and critically enumerating the principal characteristics of Mahāyānism, they placed rather too much stress upon those points that do not in these latter days appear to be very essential, but that were then considered by them to be of paramount importance. These points, never-

theless, throw some light on the nature of Mahāyāna Buddhism as historically distinguished from its consanguineous rival and fellow-doctrine

Sthiramati's Conception of Mahāyānism.

Sthiramati¹ in his *Introduction to Mahāyānism* states that Mahāyānism is a special doctrine for the Bodhisattvas, who are to be distinguished from the other two classes, viz, the Śrāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas. The essential difference of the doctrine consists in the belief that objects of the senses are merely phenomenal and have no absolute reality, that the indestructible Dharmakāya which is all pervading constitutes the norm of existence, that all Bodhisattvas² are incarnations of the Dharmakāya, who not by their evil karma previously accumulated, but by their boundless love for all mankind, assume

¹ His date is not known, but judging from the contents of his works, of which we have at present two or three among the Chinese Tripitaka it seems that he lived later than Aśvaghosa but prior to or simultaneously with Nāgārjuna. This little book occupies a very important position in the development of Mahāyānism in India. Next to Aśvaghosa's *Awakening of Faith* the work must be carefully studied by scholars who want to grasp every phase of the history of Mahāyāna school as far as it can be learned through the Chinese documents.

² Be it remarked here that a Bodhisattva is not a particularly favored man in the sense of chosen people or elect. We are all in a way Bodhisattvas, that is, when we recognise the truth that we are equally in possession of the Samyak-sambodhi, Highest True Intelligence and through which everybody without exception can attain final enlightenment.

corporeal existences, and that persons who thus appear in the flesh, as avatars of the Buddha supreme, associate themselves with the masses in all possible social relations, in order that they might thus lead them to a state of enlightenment

While this is a very summary statement of the Mahâyâna doctrine, a more elaborate and extended enumeration of its peculiar features in contradistinction to those of Hinayânism, is made in the *Miscellanea on Mahâyâna Metaphysics*,¹ *The Spiritual Stages of the Yogâcâra*,² *An Exposition of the Holy Doctrine*,³ *A Comprehensive Treatise on Mahâyânism*,⁴ and others. Let us first explain the "Seven General Characteristics" as described in the first three works here mentioned

Seven Principal Features of Mahâyânism

According to Asanga, who lived a little later than Nâgârjuna, that is, at the time when Mahâyânism was further divided into the Yogâcârya and the Mâdhya-mika school, the seven features peculiar to Mahâyânism as distinguished from Hinayânism, are as follows

✓(1) *Its Comprehensiveness* Mahâyânism does not confine itself to the teachings of one Buddha alone,

¹ *Mahâyâna abhidharma sangisâstra*, by Asanga. Nanjo, No 1199

² *Yogâcârya bhûmi sâstra* Nanjo No 1170. The work is supposed to have been dictated to Asanga by a mythical Bodhisattva.

³ By Asanga Nanjo 1177

⁴ *Mahâyâna samparigraha sâstra* by Asanga, Nanjo 1183

but wherever and whenever truth is found, even under the disguise of most absurd superstitions, it makes no hesitation to winnow the grain from the husk and assimilate it in its own system. Innumerable good laws taught by Buddhas¹ of all ages and localities are all taken up in the coherent body of Mahāyānism.

(2) *Universal love for All Sentient Beings* Hinayānism confines itself to the salvation of individuals only, it does not extend its bliss universally, as each person must achieve his own deliverance. Mahāyānism, on the other hand, aims at general salvation, it endeavors to save us not only individually, but universally. All the motives, efforts, and actions of the Bodhisattvas pivot on the furtherance of universal welfare.

(3) *Its Greatness in Intellectual Comprehension* Mahāyānism maintains the theory of non-ātman not only in regard to sentient beings but in regard to things in general. While it denies the hypothesis of a metaphysical agent directing our mental operations, it also rejects the view that insists on the noumenal or thingish reality of existences as they appear to our senses.

(4) *Its Marvelous Spiritual Energy* The Bodhisattvas never become tired of working for universal salvation,

Perceiving an incarnation of the Dharmakāya in every spiritual leader regardless of his nationality and professed creed Mahāyānists recognise a Buddha in Socrates, Mohammed, Jesus, Francis of Assisi, Confucius, Lao-tze and many others.

nor do they despair because of the long time required to accomplish this momentous object. To try to attain enlightenment in the shortest possible period and to be self-sufficient without paying any attention to the welfare of the masses, is not the teaching of Mahâyânism.

(5) *Its Greatness in the Exercise of the Upâya*

The term *upâya* literally means expediency. The great fatherly sympathetic heart of the Bodhisattva has inexhaustible resources at his command in order that he might lead the masses to final enlightenment, each according to his disposition and environment. Mahâyânism does not ask its followers to escape the metempsychosis of birth and death for the sake of entering into the lethargic tranquility of Nirvâna, for metempsychosis in itself is no evil, and Nirvâna in its coma is not productive of any good. And as long as there are souls groaning in pain, the Bodhisattva cannot rest in Nirvâna, there is no rest for his unselfish heart, so full of love and sympathy, until he leads all his fellow beings to the eternal bliss of Buddhahood. To reach this end he employs innumerable means (*upâya*) suggested by his disinterested lovingkindness.

(6) *Its Higher Spiritual Attainment* (In Hinayânism the highest bliss attainable does not go beyond Arhatship which is ascetic samtliness. But the followers of Mahâyânism attain even to Buddhahood with all its spiritual powers.)

(7) *Its Greater Activity* When the Bodhisattva

reaches the stage of Buddhahood, he is able to manifest himself everywhere in the ten quarters of the universe ¹ and to minister to the spiritual needs of all sentient beings

These seven peculiarities are enumerated to be the reasons why the doctrine defended by the progressive Buddhists is to be called Mahāyānism, or the doctrine of great vehicle in contradistinction to Hinayānism the doctrine of small vehicle. In each case, therefore, Asanga takes pains to draw the line of demarcation distinctly between the two schools of Buddhism and not between Buddhism and all other religious doctrines which existed at his time

The Ten Essential Features of Buddhism

The following statement of the ten essential features of Mahāyānism as presented in the *Comprehensive Treatise on Mahayanism*, is made from a different standpoint from the preceding one, for it is the pronouncement of the Yogācāra school of Asanga

¹ Ancient Hindu Buddhists with their fellow philosophers believed in the existence of spiritually transfigured beings, who not hampered by the limitations of space and time can manifest themselves everywhere for the benefit of all sentient beings. We notice some mysterious figures in almost all Mahāyāna sūtras who are very often described as shedding innumerable rays of light from the forehead and illuminating all the three thousand worlds simultaneously. This may merely be a poetic exaggeration. But this Sambhogakāya or Body of Bliss (see Aśvaghosa's *Awakening of Faith* p. 101) is very difficult for us to comprehend as it is literally described. For a fuller treatment see the chapter on Trikāya

and Vasubandhu rather than that of Mahāyānism generally. This school together with the Mādhyamika school of Nāgārjuna constitute the two divisions of Hindu Mahāyānism.¹

The points enumerated by Asanga and Vasubandhu as most essential in their system are ten.

(1) It teaches an immanent existence of all things in the *Ālayavijñāna* or All Conserving Soul. The conception of an All Conserving Soul it is claimed² was suggested by Buddha in the so called Hinayāna sūtras, but on account of its deep meaning and of the liability of its being confounded with the ego-soul conception he did not disclose its full significance in their sūtras, but made it known only in the Mahāyāna sūtras.

According to the Yogācāra school the Ālaya is not an universal, but an individual mind or soul, whatever we may term it in which the 'germs' of all things exist in their ideality.³ The objective world in reality does not exist, but by dint of sub

¹ Though I am very much tempted to digress and to enter into a specific treatment concerning these two Hindu Mahāyāna doctrines I reluctantly refrain from so doing as it requires a somewhat lengthy treatment and does not entirely fall within the scope of the present work.

² That Aśvaghosa's conception of the Ālaya varies with the view here presented may be familiar to readers of his *Awakening of Faith*. This is one of the most abstruse problems in the philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhism and there are several divergent theories concerning its nature attributes activities etc. In a work like this it is impossible to give even a general statement of those controversies. However

jective illusion that is created by ignorance, we project all these "germs" in the *Ālayavijñāna* to the outside world, and imagine that they are there really as they are, while the *Manovijñāna* (ego consciousness) which is too a product of illusion, tenaciously clinging to the *Ālayavijñāna* as the real self, never abandons its egoism. The *Ālayavijñāna*, however, is indifferent to, and irresponsible for, all these errors on the part of the *Manovijñāna*.¹

(2) The *Yogācāra* school distinguishes three kinds of knowledge: 1 Illusion (*parikalpita*) 2 Discriminative or Relative Knowledge (*paratantra*) and 3 Perfect Knowledge (*pariniṣpanna*)

The distinction may best be illustrated by the well-known analogy of a rope and a snake. Deceived by a similarity in appearance, men frequently take a rope lying on the ground for a poisonous snake and

interesting they may be to students of the history of intellectual development in India.

The *Ālayavijñāna* to use the phraseology of *Samkhya* philosophy is a composition so to speak of the Soul (*puruṣa*) and Primordial Matter (*prakṛti*). It is the Soul so far as it is neutral and indifferent to all those phenomenal manifestations that are going on within as well as without us. It is Primordial Matter inasmuch as it is the reservoir of everything whose lid being lifted by the hands of Ignorance there instantly springs up this universe of limitation and relativity. Enlightenment or *Nirvāṇa*, therefore consists in recognising the error of Ignorance and not in clinging to the products of imagination.

¹ For a more detailed explanation of the ideal philosophy of the *Yogācāra* see my article on the subject in *Le Muséon*

are terribly shocked on that account. But when they approach and carefully examine it, they become at once convinced of the groundlessness of this apprehension, which was the natural sequence of illusion. This may be considered to correspond to what Kant calls *Schein*.

Most people, however, do not go any further in their inquiry. They are contented with the sensual, empirical knowledge of an object with which they come in contact. When they understand that the thing they mistook for a snake was really nothing but a yard of innocent rope, they think their knowledge of the object is complete, and do not trouble themselves with a philosophical investigation as to whether the rope which to them is just what it appears to be, has any real existence in itself. They do not stop a moment to reflect that their knowledge is merely relative, for it does not go beyond the phenomenal significance of the things they perceive.

But is an object in reality such as it appears to be to our senses? Are particular phenomena as such really actual? What is the value of our knowledge concerning those so-called realities? When we make an investigation into such problems as these, the Yogâcâra school says, we find that their existence is only relative and has no absolute value whatever independent of the perceiving subject. They are the "ejection" of our ideas into the outside world, which are centred and conserved in our *Ālayavijñāna* and which are awakened into activity by subjective

ignorance. This clear insight into the nature of things, i.e., into their non-reality as *âtman*, constitutes perfect knowledge.

(3) When we attain to the perfect knowledge, we recognise the ideality of the universe. There is no such thing as an objective world, which is really an illusive manifestation of the mind called *Âlayavijñāna*. But even this supposedly real existence of the *Âlayavijñāna* is a product of particularisation called forth by the ignorant *Manovijñāna*. The *Manovijñāna*, or empirical ego, as it might be called, having no adequate knowledge as to the true nature of the *Âlaya*, takes the latter for a metaphysical agent, that like the master of a puppet show manages all mental operations according to its humour. As the silkworm imprisons itself in the cocoon created by itself, the *Manovijñāna*, entangling itself in ignorance and confusion, takes its own illusory creations for real realities.

(4) For the regulation of moral life, the *Yogâcâra* with the other *Mahâyâna* schools, proposes the practising of the six *Pâramitâs* (virtues of perfection), which are 1 *Dana* (giving), 2 *Śīla* (moral precept), 3 *Kṣântī* (meekness), 4 *Vīrya* (energy), 5 *Dhyāna* (meditation), 6 *Prajña* (knowledge or wisdom). In way of explanation says Asanga 'By not clinging to wealth or pleasures (1), by not cherishing any thoughts to violate the precepts (2), by not feeling dejected in the face of evils (3), by not awakening any thought of indolence while practising goodness (4),

by maintaining serenity of mind in the midst of disturbance and confusion of this world (5), and finally by always practising *ekacitta*¹ and by truthfully comprehending the nature of things (6), the Bodhisattvas recognise the truth of *vyñānamātra*, — the truth that there is nothing that is not of ideal or subjective creation

(5) Mahāyānism teaches that there are ten spiritual stages of Bodhisattvahood, viz , 1. Pramuditā, 2 Vimalā, 3 Prabhākari, 4. Arcismati, 5 Sudurjayā, 6 Abhimukhi, 7 Dûrangamā 8 Acalā, 9 Sādhumati, 10 Dharmameghā² By passing through all these stages one after another, we are believed to reach the oneness of Dharmakāya

(6) The Yogācārists claim that the precepts that are practised by the followers of Mahāyānism are far superior to those of Hīnayānists The latter tend to externalism and formalism, and do not go deep into our spiritual, subjective motives Now, there are physical verbal, and spiritual precepts observed by the Buddha The Hīnayānists observe the first two neglecting the last which is by far more important than the rest For instance, the Çrāvaka's interpretation of the ten Çikṣas³ is literal and not spiritual,

¹ One mind or one heart meaning the mental attitude which is in harmony with the monistic view of nature in its broadest sense

² These ten stages of spiritual development are somewhat minutely explained below See Chapter XII

³ The ten moral precepts of the Buddha are (1) Kill no living being (2) Take nothing that is not given (3) Keep

further, they follow these precepts because they wish to attain Nirvāna for their own sake, and not for others'. The Bodhisattva, on the other hand, does not wish to be bound within the narrow circle of moral restriction. Aiming at an universal emancipation of mankind, he ventures even violating the ten *çikṣas*, if necessary. The first *çikṣa*, for instance, forbids the killing of any living being, but the Bodhisattva does not hesitate to go to war, in case the cause he espouses is right and beneficent to humanity at large.

(7) As Mahāyānism insists on the purification of the inner life, its teaching applies not to things outward, its principles are not of the ascetic and exclusive kind. The Mahāyānists do not shun to commingle themselves with the "dust of worldliness", they aim at the realisation of the Bodhi, they are not afraid of being thrown into the whirlpool of metempsychosis, they endeavor to impart spiritual benefits to all sentient beings without regard to their attitude, whether hostile or friendly, towards themselves, having immovable faith in the Mahāyāna, they never become contaminated by vanity and worldly pleasures with which they may constantly be in touch. They have a clear insight into the doctrine of non-ātman, being free from all spiritual faults, they live in perfect accord with the laws of Suchness and discharge their duties without the

matrimonial sanctity (4) Do not lie, (5) Do not slander, (6) Do not insult (7) Do not chatter (8) Be not greedy, (9) Bear no malice (10) Harbor no scepticism

least conceit or self-assertion: in a word, their inner life is a realisation of the Dharmakāya

(8) The intellectual superiority of the Bodhisattva is shown by his possession of knowledge of non-particularisation (*anānārtha*)¹ This knowledge, philosophically considered, is the knowledge of the absolute, or the knowledge of the universal. The Bodhisattva's mind is free from the dualism of *samsāra* (birth-and-death) and *nirvāna*, of positivism and negativism, of being and non-being, of object and subject, of ego and non-ego. His knowledge, in short, transcends the limits of final realities, soaring high to the realm of the absolute and the abode of non-particularity.

(9) In consequence of this intellectual elevation, the Bodhisattva perceives the working of birth and death in *nirvāna*, and *nirvāna* in the transmigration of birth and death. He sees the "ever-changing many" in the "never-changing one," and the "never-

¹ Mahāyānism recognises two "entrances" through which a comprehensive knowledge of the universe is obtained. One is called the "entrance of sameness" (*samatā*) and the other the "entrance of diversity" (*nānātva*). The first entrance introduces us to the universality of things and suggests a pantheistic interpretation of existence. The second leads us to the particularity of things culminating in monotheism or polytheism, as it is viewed from different standpoints. The Buddhists declare that neither entrance alone can lead us to the sanctum sanctorum of existence, and in order to obtain a sound well balanced knowledge of things in general, we must go through both the entrances of universality and particularity.

changing one" in the "ever-changing many" His inward life is in accord at once with the laws of transitory phenomena and with those of transcendental Suchness According to the former, he does not recoil as ascetics do when he comes in contact with the world of the senses; he is not afraid of suffering the ills that the flesh is heir to, but, according to the latter, he never clings to things evanescent, his inmost consciousness forever dwells in the serenity of eternal Suchness

(10) The final characteristic to be mentioned as distinctly Mahāyānistic is the doctrine of Trikāya There is, it is asserted, the highest being which is the ultimate cause of the universe and in which all existences find their essential origin and significance This is called by the Mahāyānists Dharmakāya The Dharmakāya, however, does not remain in its absoluteness, it reveals itself in the realm of cause and effect It then takes a particular form It becomes a devil, or a god, or a deva, or a human being, or an animal of lower grade, adapting itself to the degrees of the intellectual development of the people For it is the people's inner needs which necessitate the special forms of manifestation This is called Nirmānakāya, that is the body of transformation The Buddha who manifested himself in the person of Gautama, the son of King of Cuddhodāna about two thousand five hundred years ago on the Ganges, is a form of Nirmānakāya The third one is called Sambhogakāya, or body of bliss This is the spiri

tual body of a Buddha, invested with all possible grandeur in form and in possession of all imaginable psychic powers. The conception of Sambhogakāya is full of wild imaginations which are not easy of comprehension by modern minds.¹

These characteristics enumerated at seven or ten as peculiarly Mahāyānistic are what the Hindu Buddhist philosophers of the first century down to the fifth or sixth century of the Christian era thought to be the most essential points of their faith and what they thought entitled it to be called the "Great Vehicle" (*Mahāyāna*) of salvation, in contradistinction to the faith embraced by their conservative brethren. But, as we view them now, the points here specified are to a great extent saturated with a partisan spirit, and besides they are more or less scattered and unconnected statements of the so-called salient features of Mahāyānism. Nor do they furnish much information concerning the nature of Mahāyānism as a coherent system of religious teachings. They give but a general and somewhat obscure delineation of it, and that in opposition to Hinayānism. In point of fact, Mahāyānism is a school of Buddhism and has many characteristics in common with Hinayānism. Indeed the spirit of the former is also that of the latter, and as far as the general trend of Buddhism is concerned there is no need of em-

¹ The doctrine of Trikāya will be given further elucidation in the chapter bearing the same title.

phasising the significance of one school over the other. On the following pages I shall try to present a more comprehensive and impartial exposition of the Buddhism, which has been persistently designated by its followers as Mahāyānism.

SPECULATIVE MAHÂYÂNISM.

CHAPTER III

PRACTISE AND SPECULATION

MAHÂYÂNISM perhaps can best be treated in two main divisions, as it has distinctly two principal features in its doctrinal development. I may call one the speculative phase of Mahâyânism and the other practical. The first part is essentially a sort of Buddhist metaphysics, where the mind is engaged solely in ratiocination and abstraction. Here the intellect plays a very prominent part, and some of the most abstruse problems of philosophy are freely discussed. Speculative followers of Buddhism have taken great interest in the discussion of them and have written many volumes on various subjects.¹

¹ No efforts have yet been made systematically to trace the history of the development of the Mahâyâna thoughts in India as well as in China and Japan. We have enough material at least to follow the general course it has taken, as far as the Chinese and Tibetan collections of Tripitaka are concerned. When a thorough comparison by impartial unprejudiced scholars of these documents has been made with the Pali and Sanskrit literature then we shall be able to write a *comprehensive history of the human thought that*

The second or practical phase of Mahâyânism deals with such religious beliefs that constitute the life and essence of the system. Mahâyânists might have reasoned wrongfully to explain their practical faith, but the faith itself is the outburst of the religious sentiment which is inherent in human nature. This practical part, therefore, is by far more important, and in fact it can be said that the speculative part is merely a preparatory step toward it. Inasmuch as Mahâyânism is a religion and not a philosophical system, it must be practical, that is, it must directly appeal to the inmost life of the human heart.

Relation of Feeling and Intellect in Religion

So much has been said about the relation between philosophy and religion, and there are many scholars who so firmly believe in the identity of religion either with superstitions or with supernatural revelation, that the denial of this assertion is considered by them practically to be the disavowal of all religions. For, according to them, there is no midway in religion. A religion which is rational and yet practical is no religion. Now, Buddhism is neither a vagary of imagination nor a revelation from above, and on this account it has been declared by some to be a philosophy. The title "Speculative Mahâyânism" thus, is apt to

have governed the Oriental people during the last two thousand years. When this is done the result can further be compared with the history of other religious systems, thus throwing much light on the general evolution of humanity.

be taken as a confirmation of such opinion. To remove all the misconceptions, therefore, which might be entertained concerning the religious nature of Mahâyānism and its attitude toward intellectualism, I have deemed it wise here to say a few words about the relation between feeling and intellect in religion.

There is no doubt that religion is essentially practical, it does not necessarily require theorisation. The latter, properly speaking, is the business of philosophy. If religion was a product of the intellect solely, it could not give satisfaction to the needs of man's whole being. Reason constitutes but a part of the organised totality of an individual being. Abstraction however high, and speculation however deep do not as such satisfy the inmost yearnings of the human heart. But this they can do when they enter into one's inner life and constitution, that is, when abstraction becomes a concrete fact and speculation a living principle in one's existence, in short, when philosophy becomes religion.

Philosophy as such, therefore, is generally distinguished from religion. But we must not suppose that religion as the deepest expression of a human being can eliminate altogether from it the intellectual element. The most predominant rôle in religion may be played by the imagination and feeling, but ratiocination must not fail to assert its legitimate right in the co-ordination of beliefs. When this right is denied religion becomes fanaticism, superstition, *fata morgana* and even a menace to the progress of humanity.

The intellect is critical, objective, and always tries to stand apart from the things that are taken up for examination. This alienation or keeping itself aloof from concrete facts on the part of the intellect, constantly tends to disregard the real significance of life, of which it is also a manifestation. Therefore, the conflict between feeling and reason, religion and science, instinct and knowledge, has been going on since the awakening of consciousness.

Seeing this fact, intellectual people are generally prone to condemn religion as barring the freedom and obstructing the progress of scientific investigations. It is true that religion went frequently to the other extreme and tried to suppress the just claim of reason, it is true that this was especially the case with Christianity, whose history abounds with regrettable incidents resulting from its violent encroachments upon the domain of reason. It is also true that the feeling and the intellect are sometimes at variance, that what the feeling esteems as the most valuable treasure is at times relentlessly crushed by the reason, while the feeling looks with utmost contempt at the results that have been reached by the intellect after much lucubration. But this fatal conflict is no better than the fight which takes place between the head and the tail of a hydra when it is cut in twain, it always results in self destruction.

We cannot live under such a miserable condition forever, when we know that it is altogether due to a myopia on the part of our understanding. The

truth is that feeling and reason "cannot do without one another, and must work together inseparably in the process of human development, since reason without feeling could have nothing to act for and would be impotent to act, while feeling without reason would act tyrannically and blindly — that is to say, if either could exist and act at all without the other, for in the end it is not feeling nor reason, which acts, but it is the man who acts according as he feels and reasons' (H. Maudsley's *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, p. vii). If it is thus admitted that feeling and reason must co-ordinate and co-operate in the realisation of human ideals, religion, though essentially a phenomenon of the emotional life, cannot be indifferent to the significance of the intellect. Indeed, religion, as much as philosophy, has ever been speculating on the problems that are of the most vital importance to human life. In Christianity speculation has been carried on under the name of theology, though it claims to be fundamentally a religion of faith. In India, however, as mentioned elsewhere, there was no dividing line between philosophy and religion, and every teaching, every system, and every doctrine, however abstract and speculative it might appear to the Western mind, was at bottom religious and always aimed at the deliverance of the soul. There was no philosophical system that did not have some practical purpose.

Indian thinkers could not separate religion from

philosophy, practice from theory Their philosophy flowed out of the very spring of the human heart and was not a mere display of fine intellectuation If their thinking were not in the right direction and led to a fallacy which made life more miserable, they were ever ready to surrender themselves to a superior doctrine as soon as it was discovered But when they thought they were in the right track, they did not hesitate to sacrifice their life for it Their philosophy had as much fire as religion

Buddhism and Speculation

Owing to this fact, Buddhism as much as Hinduism is full of abstract speculations and philosophical reflections so much so that some Christian critics are inclined to deny the religiosity of Buddhism But no student of the science of comparative religion would indorse such a view nowadays Buddhism, in spite of its predominant intellectualism, is really a religious system There is no doubt that it emphasises the rational element of religion more than any other religious teachings, but on that account we cannot say that it altogether disregards the importance of the part to be played by the feeling Its speculative, philosophical phase is really a preparation for fully appreciating the subjective significance of religion, for religion is ultimately subjective, that is to say, the essence of religion is love and faith, or, to use Buddhist phraseology, it is the expression of the Bodhi which

consists in *prajñā*¹ (intelligence or wisdom) and *karuṇā* (love or compassion) Mere knowledge (not *prajñā*) has very little value in human life When not guided by love and faith, it readily turns out to be the most obedient servant of egoism and sensualism What Tennyson says in the following verses is perfectly true with Buddhism

'Who loves not knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail

"But on her forehead sits a fire,
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire

"Half grown as yet a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death
What is she cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power Let her know her place,
She is the second, not the first.

'A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain, and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With Wisdom, like the younger child.

¹ *Prajñā*, *bodhi*, *buddhi* *vidyā* and *jñā* or *jñāna* are all synonymous and in many cases interchangeable But they allow a finer discrimination Speaking in a general way, *prajñā* is reason *bodhi* wisdom or intelligence *buddhi* enlightenment, *vidyā* ideality or knowledge, and *jñā* or *jñāna* intellect Of these five terms *prajñā* and *bodhi* are essentially Buddhistic

But it must be remembered that Buddhism never ignores the part which is played by the intellect in the purification of faith. For it is by the judicious exercise of the intellect, that all religious superstitions and prejudices are finally destroyed.

The intellect is so far of great consequence, and we must respect it as the thunderbolt of Vajrapani, which crushes everything that is mere sham and false. But at the same time we must also remember that the quintessence of religion like the house built on the solid rock never suffers on account of this destruction. Its foundation lies too deeply buried in human and have acquired technical meaning. In this work both *prajñā* and *bodhi* are mostly translated by intelligence, for their extent of meaning closely overlaps each other. But this is rather vague, and wherever I thought the term intelligence alone to be misleading I either left the originals untranslated or inserted them in parentheses. To be more exact, *prajñā* in many cases can safely be rendered by faith, not a belief in revealed truths but a sort of immediate knowledge gained by intuitive intelligence. *Prajñā* corresponds in some respects to wisdom meaning the foundation of all reasonings and experiences. It may also be considered an equivalent for Greek *sophia*. *Bodhi*, on the other hand, has a decidedly religious and moral significance. Besides being *prajñā* itself it is also love (*karuṇā*) for according to Buddhism these two, *prajñā* and *karuṇā*, constitute the essence of *Bodhi*. May *Bodhi* be considered in some respects synonymous with the divine wisdom as understood by Christian dogmatists? But there is something in the Buddhist notion of *Bodhi* that cannot properly be expressed by wisdom or intelligence. This seems to be due to the difference of philosophical interpretation by Buddhists and Christians of the conception of God. It will become clearer as we proceed farther.

heart to be damaged by knowledge or science. So long as there is a human heart warm with blood and burning with the fire of life, the intellect however powerful will never be able to trample it under foot. Indeed, the more severely the religious sentiment is tested in the crucible of the intellect, the more glorious and illuminating becomes its intrinsic virtue. The true religion is, therefore, never reluctant to appear before the tribunal of scientific investigation. In fact by ignoring the ultimate significance of the religious consciousness, science is digging its own grave. For what purpose has science other than the unravelling of the mysteries of nature and reading into the meaning of existence? And is this not what constitutes the foundation of religion? Science cannot be final, it must find its reason in religion, as a mere intellectual exercise it is not worthy of our serious consideration.

Religion and Metaphysics

The French sociologist, M. Guyau says in his *Irreligion of the Future* (English translation p. 10)

'Every positive and historical religion presents three distinctive and essential elements (1) An attempt at a mythical and non scientific explanation of natural phenomena (divine intervention, miracles, efficacious prayers, etc.), or of historical facts (incarnation of Jesus Christ or of Buddha, revelation, and so forth), (2) A system of dogmas, that is to say, of symbolic ideas, of imaginative beliefs, forcibly

imposed upon one's faith as absolute verities, even though they are susceptible of no scientific demonstration or philosophical justification, (3) A cult and a system of rites, that is to say, of more or less immutable practices regarded as possessing a marvelous efficacy upon the course of things, a propitiatory virtue. A religion without myth, without dogma, without cult, without rite, is no more than that somewhat bastard product, 'natural religion,' which is resolvable to a system of metaphysical hypotheses."

M. Guyau seems to think that what will be left in religion, when severed from its superstitions and imaginary beliefs and mysterious rites, is a system of metaphysical speculations, and that, therefore, it is not a religion. But in my opinion the French sociologist shares the error that is very prevalent among the scientific men of to day. He is perfectly right in trying to strip religion of all its ephemeral elements and external integuments, but he is entirely wrong when he does this at the expense of its very essence, which consists of the inmost yearnings of the human heart. And this essence has no affinity with the superstitions which grow round it like excrescences as the results of insufficient or abnormal nourishment. Nor does it concern itself with mere philosophising and constructing hypotheses about metaphysical problems. Far from it. Religion is a cry from the abysmal depths of the human heart, that can never be silenced, until it finds that something and identifies itself with it, which reveals the teleo-

logical significance of life and the universe. But this something has a subjective value only, as Goethe makes Faust exclaim, "Feeling is all in all, name for it I have none." Why? Because it cannot objectively or intellectually be demonstrated, as in the case with those laws which govern phenomenal existences, — the proper objects of the discursive human understanding. And this subjectivity of religion is what makes "all righteousnesses as filthy garments." If religion deprived of its dogmas and cults is to be considered, as M. Guyau thinks, nothing but a system of metaphysics, we utterly lose sight of its subjective significance or its emotional element, which indeed constitutes its *raison d'être*.

* * *

Having this in view we proceed to see first on what metaphysical hypothesis speculative Mahāyāna Buddhism is built up, but the reader must remember that this phase of Mahāyānism is merely a preliminary to its more essential part, which we expound later under the heading of "Practical Mahāyānism," in contradistinction to "Speculative Mahāyānism."

CHAPTER IV

CLASSIFICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Three Forms of Knowledge

MAHÂYÂNISM generally distinguishes two or three forms of knowledge. This classification is a sort of epistemology, inasmuch as it proposes to ascertain the extent and nature of human knowledge, from a religious point of view. Its object is to see what kind of human knowledge is most reliable and valuable for the annihilation of ignorance and the attainment of enlightenment. The Mahâyâna school which has given most attention to this division of Buddhist philosophy is the Yogâcâra of Asanga and Vasubandhu. The *Lankâvatarâ* and the *Sandhinirmocana* and some other Sûtras, on which the school claims to have its doctrinal foundation, teach three forms of knowledge. The sûtra literature, however, as a rule does not enter into any detailed exposition of the subject, it merely classifies knowledge and points out what form of knowledge is most desirable by the Buddhists. To obtain a fuller and more discursive elucidation, we must come to the Abhidharma Pitaka of that school. Of the text books most generally studied the

Yogâcâra, we may mention Vasubandhu's *Vijñānamātra* with its commentaries and Asanga's *Comprehensive Treatise on Mahāyānism*. The following statements are abstracted mainly from these documents

The three forms of knowledge as classified by the Yogâcâra are (1) Illusion (*parikalpita*), (2) Relative Knowledge (*paratantra*), and (3) Absolute Knowledge (*pariniṣpanna*)

Illusion

Illusion (*parikalpita*), to use Kantian phraseology, is a sense perception not co-ordinated by the categories of the understanding, that is to say, it is a purely subjective elaboration, not verified by objective reality and critical judgment. So long as we make no practical application of it, it will harbor no danger, there is no evil in it, at least religiously. Perceptual illusion is a psychical fact, and as such it is justified. A straight rod in water appears crooked on account of the refraction of light, a sensation is often felt in the limb after it has been amputated, for the nervous system has not yet adjusted itself to the new condition. They are all illusions however. They are doubtless the correct interpretation of the sense impressions in question, but they are not confirmed by other sense-impressions whose coordination is necessary to establish an objective reality. The moral involved in this is all sound inferences and correct behavior must be based on critical knowledge and not on illusory premises.

Reasoning in this wise, the Mahāyānists declare that the egoism fostered by vulgar minds belongs to this class of knowledge, though of a different order, and that those who tenaciously cling to egoism as their final stronghold are believers in an intellectual *fata morgana*, and are like the thirsty deer that madly after the visionary water in the desert, or like the crafty monkey that tries to catch the lunar reflection in the water. Because the belief in the existence of a metaphysical agent behind our mental phenomena is not confirmed by experience and sound judgment, it being merely a product of unenlightened subjectivity.

Besides this ethical and philosophical egoism, all forms of world conception which is founded on the sandy basis of subjective illusion, such as fetichism, idolatry, anthropomorphism, anthropopsychism, and the like, must be classed under the *parikalpita laksana* as doctrines having illusionary premises.

Relative Knowledge

Next comes the *paratantra laksana*, a *weltanschauung* based upon relative knowledge, or better, upon the knowledge of the law of relativity. According to this view everything in the world has a relative and conditional existence, and nothing can claim an absolute reality free from all limitations. This closely corresponds to the theory advanced by most of modern scientists whose agnosticism denies our intellectual capability of transcending the law of relativity.

The *paratantra laksana*, therefore, consists in the knowledge derived from our daily intercourse with the outward world. It deals with the highest abstractions we can make out of our sensuous experiences. It is positivistic in its strictest sense. It says: The universe has only a relative existence, and our knowledge is necessarily limited. Even the highest generalisation cannot go beyond the law of relativity. It is impossible for us to know the first cause and the ultimate end of existence, nor have we any need to go thus beyond the sphere of existence, which would inevitably involve us in the maze of mystic imagination.

The *paratantra laksana*, therefore, is a positivism, agnosticism, or empiricism in its spirit. Though the Yogâcâra Buddhists do not use all these modern philosophical terms, the interpretation here given is really what they intended to mean by the second form of knowledge. A world-conception based on this view, it is declared by the Mahâyânists, is sound as far as our perceptual knowledge is concerned, but it does not exhaust the entire field of human experience, for it does not take into account our spiritual life and our inmost consciousness. There is something in the human heart that refuses to be satisfied with merely systematising under the so-called laws of nature those multitudinous impressions which we receive from the outside world. There is a singular feeling, or sentiment, or yearning, whatever we may call it, in our inmost heart, which defies any plainer.

description than a mere suggestion or an indirect statement. This somewhat mystic consciousness seems despite its obscureness to contain the meaning of our existence as well as that of the universe. The intellect may try to persuade us with all its subtle reasonings to subdue this disquieting feeling and to remain contented with the systematising of natural laws, so called. But it is deceiving itself by so doing, because the intellect is but a servant to the heart, and so far as it is not forced to self contradiction, it must accommodate itself to the needs of the heart. That is to say, we must transcend the narrow limits of conditionality and see what indispensable postulates are underlying our life and experiences. The recognition of these indispensable postulates of life constitutes the *Yogâcâra's* third form of knowledge called *parinispanna laksana*.

Absolute Knowledge

[*Parinispanna laksana* literally means the world view founded on the most perfect knowledge. According to this view, the universe is a monistico-pantheistic system. While phenomenal existences are regulated by natural laws characterised by conditionality and individuation, they by no means exhaust all our experiences which are stored in our inmost consciousness. There must be something, — this is the absolute demand of humanity, the ultimate postulate of experience, — be it Will, or Intelligence, which, underlying and animating all existences, forms

the basis of cosmic, ethical, and religious life. This highest Will, or Intelligence, or both may be termed God, but the Mahâyânists call it religiously Dharma-kâya, ontologically Bhûtatathâtâ, and psychologically Bodhi or Sambodhi. And they think it must be immanent in the universe manifesting itself in all places and times, it must be the cause of perpetual creation, it must be the principle of morality. This being so, how do we come to the recognition of its presence? The Buddhists say that when our minds are clear of illusions, prejudices, and egotistic assumptions, they become transparent and reflect the truth like a dust-free mirror. The illumination thus gained in our consciousness constitutes the so called *parinispanna*, the most perfect knowledge, that leads to Nirvâna, final salvation, and eternal bliss.

World views Founded on the Three Forms of Knowledge

The reason will be obvious to the reader why the Yogâcâra school distinguishes three classes of world conception founded on the three kinds of knowledge. The *parikalpita laksana* is most primitive and most puerile. However, in these days of enlightenment, what is believed by the masses is naught else than a *parikalpita* conception of the world. The material existence as it appears to our senses is to them all in all. They seem to be unable to shake off the yoke of egoistic illusion and naive realism. Their God must be transcendent and anthro-

popathic, and always willing to meddle with worldly affairs as his whim pleases. How different the world is, in which the multitudes of unreflecting minds are living, from that which is conceived by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas! Hartmann, a German thinker, is right, when he says that the masses are at least a century behind in their intellectual culture. But the most strange thing in the world is that, in spite of all their ignorance and superstitious beliefs, the waves of universal transformation are ever carrying them onward to a destination, of which perhaps, they have not the slightest suspicion.

The *paratantra lakṣaṇa* advances a step further, but the fundamental error involved in it is its persistent self contradictory disregard for what our inmost consciousness is constantly revealing to us. The intellect alone can by no means unravel the mystery of our entire existence. In order to reach the highest truth, we must boldly plunge with our whole being into a region where absolute darkness defying the light of intellect is supposed to prevail. This region which is no more nor less than the field of religious consciousness is shunned by most of the intellectual people on the plea that the intellect by its very nature is unable to fathom it. But the only way that leads us to the final pacification of the heart yearnings is to go beyond the horizons of limiting reason and to resort to the faith that has been planted in the heart as the *sine qua non* of its own existence and vitality. And by 'faith' I mean *Prajna* (wisdom) transcendental |

knowledge, that comes direct from the intelligence-essence of the Dharmakāya. A mind, so tired in vainly searching after truth and bliss in the verbiage of philosophy and the nonsense of ritualism, finds itself here completely rested bathing in the rays of divine effulgence, — whence this is, it does not question, being so filled with supramundane blessings which alone are felt. Buddhism calls this exalted spiritual state Nirvāṇa or Mokṣa; and *pariniṣpanna-lakṣaṇa* is a world-conception which naturally follows from this subjective, ideal enlightenment.¹

Two Forms of Knowledge.

The other Hindu Mahāyānism, the Mādhyamika school of Nāgārjuna, distinguishes two, instead of three, orders of knowledge, but practically the Yogācāra and the Mādhyamika come to the same conclusion.²

¹ For detailed exposition of the three forms of knowledge, the reader is requested to peruse Asanga's *Comprehensive Treatise on Mahāyānism* (Nanjo's Catalogue, No. 1183), Vasubandhu's work on Mahāyāna idealism (*Vijñānamātra Śāstra*, Nanjo, No. 1215), the *Sūtra on the Mystery of Deliverance* (*Sandhikirmocana sūtra*, Nanjo Nos. 246 and 247), etc.

² When the eminent representatives of both parties, such as Dharmapala and Bhavaviveka, were at the height of their literary activity in India about the fifth or sixth century after Christ, their partisan spirit incited them bitterly to denounce each other, forgetting the common ground on which their principles were laid down. Their disagreement in fact on which they put an undue emphasis was of a very trifling nature. It was merely a quarrel over phraseology, for one insisted on using certain words just in the sense which the other negated.

The two kinds of knowledge or truth distinguished by the Mādhyamika philosophy are *Samvrtti satya* and *Paramārtha satya*, that is conditional truth and transcendental truth. We read in Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamika Śāstra* (Buddhist Text Society edition pp 180, 181)

On two truths is founded
The holy doctrine of Buddhas
Truth conditional
And truth transcendental

Those who verily know not
The distinction of the two truths
Know not the essence
Of Buddhism which is meaningful

The conditional truth includes illusion and relative knowledge of the Yogācāra school while the transcendental truth corresponds to the absolute knowledge

In explaining these two truths, the Mādhyamika philosophers have made a constant use of the terms *śūnya* and *aśūnya* void and not void which unfortunately became a cause of the misunderstanding by Christian scholars of Nāgārjuna's transcendental philosophy. Absolute truth is void in its ultimate nature for it contains nothing concrete or real or individual that makes it an object of particularisation. But this must not be understood as is done by some superficial critics in the sense of absolute

“Dve satye samupācṛitya buddhānām dhardeṇā
Lokasamvrtti satyañ ca satyañ ca paramārthataḥ
Ye ca anayor na jānanti vibhāgam satyayor dvayoh
Tat tadvām na v jānanti gambhīrabuddhaçāsane

nothingness. The Mādhyamika philosophers make the *satya* (transcendental truth) empty when contrasted with the realness of phenomenal existences. Because it is not real in the sense a particular being is real, but it is empty since it transcends the principle of individuation. When considered absolutely, it can neither be empty nor not-empty, neither *śūnya* nor *aśūnya*, neither *astī* nor *nāstī*, neither *abhāva* nor *bhāva*, neither real nor unreal. All these terms imply relation and contrast, while the *Paramārtha Satya* is above them, or better, it unifies all contrasts and antitheses in its absolute oneness. Therefore, even to designate it at all may lead to the misunderstanding of the true nature of the *Satya*, for naming is particularising. It is not, as such, an object of intellectuation or of demonstrative knowledge. It underlies everything conditional and phenomenal, and does not permit itself to be a particular object of discrimination.

Transcendental Truth and Relative Understanding

One may say. If transcendental truth is of such an abstract nature, beyond the reach of the understanding, how can we ever hope to attain it and enjoy its blessings? But Nāgārjuna says that it is not absolutely out of the ken of the understanding, it is, on the contrary, through the understanding that we become acquainted with the quarter towards which our spiritual efforts should be directed, only,

let us not cling to the means by which we grasp the final reality. A finger is needed to point at the moon, but when we have recognised the moon, let us no more trouble ourselves with the finger. The fisherman carries a basket to take the fish home, but what need has he to worry about the basket when the contents are safely on the table? Only so long as we are not yet aware of the way to enlightenment, let us not ignore the value of relative knowledge or conditional truth or *lokasamvrttisatya* as Nāgārjuna terms it.

If not by worldly knowledge
The truth is not understood,
When the truth is not approached
Nirvāna is not attained

From this, it is to be inferred that Buddhism never discourages the scientific, critical investigation of religious beliefs. For it is one of the functions of science that it should purify the contents of a belief and that it should point out in which direction our final spiritual truth and consolation have to be sought. Science alone which is built on relative knowledge is not able to satisfy all our religious cravings, but it is certainly able to direct us to the path of enlightenment. When this path is at last revealed, we shall know how to avail ourselves of the discovery, as then *Prajñā* (or *Sambodhi* or *Wisdom*) becomes the

1 Vyavahāram anācṛitya paramārtho na deçyate
Paramārtham anāgamyā nirvānam na adhigamyata
The *Mādhyamaka* p. 181

guide of life. Here we enter into the region of the unknowable. The spiritual facts we experience are not demonstrable, for they are so direct and immediate that the uninitiated are altogether at a loss to get a glimpse of them.

CHAPTER V.

BHÛTATATHÂTÂ (SUCHNESS)

FROM the ontological point of view, Paramârtha-satya or Parinispanna (transcendental truth) is called Bhûtatathâtâ, which literally means "suchness of existence." As Buddhism does not separate being from thought nor thought from being, what is suchness in the objective world, is transcendental truth in the subjective world, and *vice versa* Bhûtatathâtâ, then, is the Godhead of Buddhism, and it marks the consummation of all our mental efforts to reach the highest principle, which unifies all possible contradictions and spontaneously directs the course of world-events. In short, it is the ultimate postulate of existence. Like Paramârtha-satya, as above stated, it does not belong to the domain of demonstrative knowledge or sensuous experience, it is unknowable by the ordinary processes of intellectuation, which the natural sciences use in the formulation of general laws, and it is grasped, declare the Buddhists, only by the minds that are capable of exercising what might be called religious intuition.

Açvaghosa argues, in his *Awakening of Faith* for the indefinability of this first principle. When we say, it is çûnya or empty, on account of its being indepen-

dent of all the thinkable qualities, which we attribute to things relative and conditional, people would take it for the nothingness of absolute void. But when we define it as a real reality, as it stands above the evanescence of phenomena, they would imagine that there is something individual and existing outside the pale of this universe, which, though as concrete as we ourselves are, lives an eternal life. It is like describing to the blind what an elephant looks like, each one of them gets but a very indistinct and imperfect conception of the huge creature, yet every one of them thinks he has a true and most comprehensive idea of it.¹ Aṣvaghosa, thus, wishes to eschew all definite statements concerning the ultimate nature of being, but as language is the only mode with which we mortals can express our ideas and communicate them to others, he thinks the best expression that can be given to it is Bhūtatathâtâ, i. e., "suchness of existence," or simply, "suchness."

Bhūtatathâtâ (suchness), thus absolutely viewed, does not fall under the category of being and non being, and minds which are kept within the narrow circle of contrasts, must be said to be incapable of grasping it as it truly is. Says Nâgârjuna in his Ṣāstra (Ch. XV)

Between thisness (*svabhāva*) and thatness (*parabhāva*)
Between being and non being,
Who discriminates,
The truth of Buddhism he perceives not. *

¹ Cf. *The Udāna*, chapter VI.

² Svabhāvam parabhāvanca, bhāvanābhāvam-eva ca,
Ye paṇyanti, na paṇyante tadvam hi buddhaṇāṇāṃ

Or,

'To think 'it is', is eternalism
To think 'it is not', is nihilism
Being and non being
The wise cling not to either '

Again,

"The dualism of 'to be' and 'not to be,'
The dualism of pure and not pure
Such dualism having abandoned
The wise stand not even in the middle '

To quote, again, from the *Awakening of Faith* (pp 58—59) "In its metaphysical origin, Bhūtata-thāta has nothing to do with things defiled i.e., conditional it is free from all signs of individualisation, such as exist in phenomenal objects it is independent of an unreal, particularising consciousness '

Indefinability

Absolute Suchness from its very nature thus defies all definitions. We cannot even say that it is, for everything that is presupposes that which is not existence and non existence are relative terms as much as subject and object, mind and matter this and that, one and other one cannot be conceived

¹ Astiti cācavatagrāho, nāstityucchedadarśanam.

² Tasmādaśtitvanāstitive nācīryeta vicaksanā

³ Astiti nāstiti ubhe pi antā

Çuddhi açuddhiti ime 'pi antā

⁴ Tasmādubhe anta vivarjayitva

Madhye pi syānam na karoti



without the other. "It is not so (*na itī*)¹," therefore, may be the only way our imperfect human tongue can express it. So the Mahāyānists generally designate absolute Suchness as *Çûnyatâ* or void.

But when this most significant word, *çûnyatâ*, is to be more fully interpreted, we would say with Açvaghosa that "Suchness is neither that which is existence nor that which is non-existence, neither that which is at once existence and non existence, nor that which is not at once existence and non-existence, it is neither that which is unity nor that which is plurality; neither that which is at once unity and plurality, nor that which is not at once unity and plurality."²

¹ This is the famous phrase in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* occurring in several places (II 3, 6, III 9 26, IV, 2, 4, IV, 4 22, IV, 5 5). The Atman or Brahman it says "is to be described by No No! He is incomprehensible, for he cannot be comprehended, he is imperishable for he cannot perish, he is unattached for he does not attach himself, unfettered he does not suffer he does not fail. Him (who knows) these two do not overcome whether he says that for some reason he has done evil or for some reason he has done good—he overcomes both, and neither what he has done nor what he has omitted to do affects him.

² *The Awakening of Faith*, p. 59 Cf. this with the utterances of Dionysius the Areopagite as quoted by Prof. W. James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* pp. 416–417. "The cause of all things is neither soul nor intellect nor has it imagination opinion or reason or intelligence nor is it spoken or thought. It is neither number, nor order, nor magnitude nor littleness, nor equality nor inequality nor similarity nor dissimilarity. It neither stands, nor moves nor rests. It is neither essence nor eternity, nor time."

Nāgārjana's famous doctrine of "The Middle Path of Eight No's" breathes the same spirit, which declares:

"There is no death, no birth, no destruction, no persistence,
No oneness, no manyness, no coming, no departing."

Elsewhere, he expresses the same idea in a somewhat paradoxical manner, making the historical Buddha a real concrete manifestation of Suchness.

"After his passing, deem not thus:

'The Buddha still is here,'

He is above all contrasts,

To be and not to be.

"While living, deem not thus.

'The Buddha is now here'

He is above all contrasts,

To be and not to be."

This view of Suchness as no-ness abounds in the literature of the Dhyāna school of Mahāyānism. To cite one instance. When Bodhi-Dharma³, the founder

Even intellectual contact does not belong to it. It is neither science nor truth. It is not even royalty nor wisdom, not one; not unity, not divinity or goodness, nor even spirit as we know it" *ad libitum*

¹ Anirodham anutpādam anucchedam açāçvatam,

Anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam

(*Mādhyamika Śāstra*, first stanza)

² Param nirodhādbhagavān bhavātityeva nohyate,

Na bhavatyubhayam ceti nobhayam ceti nohyate.

Atisthamāno 'pi bhagavān bhavātityeva nohyate,

Na bhavatyubhayam ceti nobhayam ceti nohyate.

(*Mādhyamika*, p. 199)

³ He was the third son of king of Kāçī (?) in southern India. He came to China A. D. 527 and after a vain attempt to convert Emperor Wu to his own view, he retired to a monastery, where, it is reported, he spent all day in gazing at the wall.

of the Dhyāna sect, saw Emperor Wu of Liang dynasty (A D 502—556), he was asked what the first principle of the Holy Doctrine was, he did not give any lengthy, periphrastic statement after the manner of a philosopher, but laconically replied, "Vast emptiness and nothing holy." The Emperor was bewildered and did not know how to take the words of his holy adviser. Naturally, he did not expect such an abrupt answer, and, being greatly disappointed, ventured another question, "Who is he, then, that stands before me? By this he meant to repudiate the doctrine of absolute Suchness. His line of argument being this: If there is nothing in the ultimate nature of things that distinguishes between holiness and sinfulness, why this world of contrasts, where some are revered as holy, for instance, Bodhi Dharma who is at this very moment standing in front of him with the mission of propagating the holy teachings of Buddha? Bodhi Dharma, however, was a mystic and was fully convinced of the insufficiency of the human tongue to express the highest truth which is revealed only

without making any further venture to propagate his mysticism. But finally he found a most devoted disciple in the person of Shen Kuang who was once a Confucian, and through whom the Dhyāna school became one of the most powerful Mahāyāna sect in China as well as in Japan. Dharma died in the year 535. Besides the one here mentioned he had another audience with the Emperor. At that time, the Emperor said to Dharma, "I have dedicated so many monasteries, copied so many sacred books and converted so many bhiksus and bhiksunis, what do you think my merits are or ought to be? To this however Dharma replied curtly, No merit whatever."

intuitively to the religious consciousness His conclusive answer was, "I do not know" ¹

This "I do not know" is not to be understood in the spirit of agnosticism, but in the sense of "God when understood is no God," for *in se est et per se conceptur* This way of describing Suchness by negative terms only, excluding all differences of name and form (*nâmarûpa*) to reach a higher kind of affirmation, seems to be the most appropriate one, inasmuch as the human understanding is limited in so many respects, but, nevertheless, it has caused much misinterpretation even among Buddhists themselves, not to mention those Christian Buddhist scholars of to day, who sometimes appear almost wilfully to misconstrue the significance of the *çûnyatâ* philosophy It was to avoid these unfortunate misinterpretations that the Mahâyânists frequently made the paradoxical assertion that absolute Suchness is empty and not empty, *çûnya* and *açunya*, being and non being, *sat* and *asat*, one and many, this and that

The "Thundrous Silence"

There yet remains another mode of explaining absolute Suchness which though most practical and most effective for the religiously disposed minds, may prove very inadequate to a sceptical intellect

¹ Another interesting utterance by a Chinese Buddhist who, earnestly pondering over the absoluteness of Suchness for several years understood it one day all of a sudden is

The very instant you say it is something (or a nothing) you miss the mark

It is the "thundrous silence" of Vimalakīrti in response to an inquiry concerning the nature of Suchness or the "Dharma of Non-duality," as it is termed in the Sūtra.¹

Bodhisattva Vimalakīrti once asked a host of Bodhi-sattvas led by Mañjuśrī, who came to visit him, to express their views as to how to enter into the Dharma of Non-duality. Some replied, 'Birth and death are two, but the Dharma itself was never born and will never die. Those who understand this are said to enter into the Dharma of Non-duality.' Some said, "'I' and 'mine' are two. Because I think 'I am' there are things called 'mine'. But as there is no 'I am' where shall we look for things 'mine'? By thus reflecting we enter into the Dharma of Non-duality.' Some replied, 'Samsāra and Nirvāna are two. But when we understand the ultimate nature of Samsāra, Samsāra vanishes from our consciousness, and there is neither bondage nor release, neither birth nor death. By thus reflecting we enter into the Dharma of Non-duality.' Others said, 'Ignorance and enlightenment are two. No ignorance, no enlightenment, and there is no dualism. Why? Because those who have entered a meditation in which there is no sense-impression, no cogitation, are free from ignorance as well as from enlightenment. This holds true with all the other dualistic categories. Those who enter thus into the thought of sameness are

¹ *The Vimalakīrti Sūtra* Kumārajīva's translation, Part II, Chapter 5.

said to enter into the Dharma of Non-duality." Still others answered, "To long for Nirvâna and to shun worldliness are of dualism. Long not for Nirvâna, shun not worldliness, and we are free from dualism. Why? Because bondage and release are relative terms, and when there is no bondage from the beginning, who wishes to be released? No bondage, no release, and therefore no longing, no shunning: this is called the entering into the Dharma of Non-duality "

Many more answers of similar nature came forth from all the Bodhisattvas in the assembly except the leader Mañjuçrî Vimalakîrti now requested him to give his own view, and to this Mañjuçrî responded, "What I think may be stated thus: That which is in all beings wordless, speechless, shows no signs, is not possible of cognisance, and is above all questionings and answerings, — to know this is said to enter into the Dharma of Non-duality "

Finally, the host Vimalakîrti himself was demanded by Mañjuçrî to express his idea of Non-duality, but he kept completely silent and uttered not a word. Thereupon, Mañjuçrî admiringly exclaimed, "Well done, well done! The Dharma of Non duality is truly above letters and words!"¹

¹ Deussen relates, in his address delivered before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1893, a similar attitude of a Vedantist mystic in regard to the highest Brahma "The Bhava, therefore when asked by the king Vaksalin, to explain the Brahman, kept silence. And when the king repeated his request again and again, the rishi broke out into the answer 'I tell it you, but you don't understand it, *ganto 'yam âtmâ*, this âtmâ is silence' "

Now, of this Suchness, the Mahāyānists distinguish two aspects, as it is comprehended by our consciousness, which are conditional and non-conditional, or the phenomenal world of causality and the transcendental realm of absolute freedom. This distinction corresponds to that, in the field of knowledge, of relative truth and transcendental truth.¹

¹It is a well known fact that the Vedānta philosophy too makes a similar distinction between Brahman as *sagunam* (qualified) and Brahman as *nirgunam* (unqualified). The former is relative phenomenal and has characteristics of its own, but the latter is absolute having no qualification whatever to speak of it is absolute Suchness. (See Max Müller's *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* p. 220 et seq.)

Here a very interesting question suggests itself. Which is the original and which is the copy Mahāyānism or Vedāntism? Most of European Sanskrit scholars would fain wish to dispose of it at once by declaring that Buddhism must be the borrower. But I am strongly inclined to the opposite view for there is reliable evidence in favor of it. In a writing of Aśvaghoṣa who dates much earlier than Ćāṅkara or Baddarāyana we notice this distinction of absolute Suchness and relative Suchness. He writes in his *Awakening of Faith* (p. 55 et seq.) that though Suchness is free from all modes of limitation and conditionality and therefore it cannot be thought of by our finite consciousness, yet on account of Avidyā inherent in the human mind absolute Suchness manifests itself in the phenomenal world thereby subjecting itself to the law of causality and relativity and proceeds to say that there is a twofold aspect in Suchness from the point of view of its explicability. The first aspect is truthness as negation (*śūnyatā*) in the sense that it is completely set apart from the attributes of all things unreal that it is a veritable reality. The second aspect is truthness as affirmation (*aśūnyatā*) in the sense that it contains infinite merits that it is self-existent. Considering the fact that Aśvaghoṣa comes

Suchness Conditioned

Absolute transcendental Suchness defying all means of characterisation does not, as long as it so remains, have any direct significance in the phenomenal world and human life. When it does, it must become conditional Suchness as *Gesetzmässigkeit* in nature and as ethical order in our practical life. Suchness as absolute is too remote, too abstract, and may have only a metaphysical value. Its existence or non-existence seems not to affect us in our daily social life, inasmuch as it is transcendental. In order to enter into our limited consciousness, to become the norm of our conscious activities, to regulate the course of the evolutionary tide in nature. Suchness must surrender its "splendid isolation," must abandon its absoluteness.

When Suchness thus comes down from its sovereign seat in the realm of unthinkability, we have this universe unfolded before our eyes in all its diversity and magnificence. Twinkling stars inlaid in the vaulted sky, the planet elaborately decorated with verdant meadows, towering mountains, and rolling waves, the birds cheerfully singing in the woods, the beasts wildly running through the thickets, the summer heavens ornamented with white fleecy clouds and on earlier than any Vedānta philosophers it stands to reason to say that the latter might have borrowed the idea of distinguishing the two aspects of Brahma from their Buddhist predecessors.

Çāṅkara also makes a distinction between *saguna* and *nirguna* *vidya*, whose parallel we find in the Mahāyānist *samṛtti* and *paramaṛti* *satya*.

earth all branches and leaves growing in abundant luxury, the winter prairie destitute of all animation, only with naked trees here and there trembling in the dreary north winds, all these manifestations, not varying a hair's breadth of deviation from their mathematical, astronomical, physical, chemical, and biological laws, are naught else than the work of conditional Suchness in nature

When we turn to human life and history, we have the work of conditional Suchness manifested in all forms of activity as passions, aspirations, imaginations, intellectual efforts, etc. It makes us desire to eat when hungry, and to drink when thirsty, it makes the man long for the woman, and the woman for the man; it keeps children in merriment and frolic, it braces men and women bravely to carry the burden of life. When we are oppressed, it causes us to cry, "Let us have liberty or die", when we are treated with injustice, it leads us even to murder and fire and revolution, when our noble sentiments are aroused to the highest pitch, it makes us ready to sacrifice all that is most dear to us. In brief, all the kaleidoscopic changes of this phenomenal world, subjective as well as objective, come from the *playing hands of conditional Suchness*. It not only constitutes the goodness and blessings of life, but the sins, crimes, and misery which the flesh is heir to.¹

¹ While passing I cannot help digressing and entering on a polemic in this footnote. The fact is, Western Buddhist critics stubbornly refuse to understand correctly what is,

Açvaghosa in his *Awakening of Faith* speaks of the Heart (*hrdaya*) of Suchness and of the Heart of Birth-and-Death. By the Heart of Suchness he means the absolute and by the Heart of Birth-and-Death a manifestation of the absolute in this world of particulars. "They are not separate," however, says he, but they are one, for the Heart of

misled by Buddhists themselves. Even scholars who are supposed to be well informed about the subject, go astray and make false charges against Buddhism. Max Mueller, for example, declares in his *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (p. 242) that "An important distinction between Buddhists and Vedantists is that the former holds the world to have arisen from what is not, the latter from what is, the Sat or Brahman." The reader who has carefully followed my exposition above will at once detect in this Max Mueller's conclusion an incorrect statement of Buddhist doctrine. As I have repeatedly said, Suchness, though described in negative terms, is not a state of nothingness, but the highest possible synthesis that the human intellect can reach. The world did not come from the void of Suchness, but from its fulness of reality. If it were not so, to where does Buddhism want us to go after deliverance from the evanescence and nothingness of the phenomenal world?

Max Mueller in another place (op. cit. p. 210) speaks of the Vedantists' assertion of the reality of the objective world for practical purposes (*vyavahārārtham*) and of their antagonistic attitude toward 'the nihilism of the Buddhists.' "The Buddhists" this seems to refer to the followers of the Mādhyamika school, but a careful perusal of their texts will reveal that what they denied was not the realness of the world as a manifestation of conditional Suchness, but its independent realness and our attachment to it as such. The Mādhyamika school was not in any sense a nihilistic system. True, its advocates used many negative terms, but what they meant by them was obvious enough to any careful reader.

Suchness is the Heart of Birth and Death. It is on account of our limited senses and finite mind that we have a world of particulars, which, as it is, is no more than a fragment of the absolute Bhūtatathātā. And yet it is through this fragmentary manifestation that we are finally enabled to reach the fundamental nature of being in its entirety. Says Aṣvaghosa, 'Depending on the Tathāgata garbha, there evolves the Heart of Birth and Death. What is immortal and what is mortal are harmoniously blended, for they are not one, nor are they separate. Herein all things are organised. Hereby all things are created.'

The above is from the ontological standpoint. When viewed psychologically, the Heart of Suchness is enlightenment, for Buddhism makes no distinction between being and thought, world and mind. The ultimate nature of the two is considered to be absolutely one. Now, speaking of the nature of enlightenment Aṣvaghosa says "It is like the emptiness of space and the brightness of the mirror in that it is true, and real and great. It completes and perfects all things. It is free from the condition of destructibility. In it is reflected every phase of life and activity in the world. Nothing goes out of it, nothing enters into it, nothing is annihilated, nothing is destroyed. It is one eternal soul, no forms of defilement can defile it. It is the essence of intelligence. By reason of its numerous immaculate virtues which inhere in it, it perfumes the hearts of all beings. Thus, the Heart of Suchness, which is enlightenment and,

the essence of intelligence, constantly works in and through the hearts of all human beings, that is, in and through our finite minds. In this sense, Buddhism declares that truth is not to be sought in highly abstract philosophical formulæ, but in the phenomena of our everyday life such as eating, dressing, walking, sleeping, etc. The Heart of Suchness acts and does not abstract, it synthesises and does not "dissect to murder."

Questions Defying Solution

Speaking of the world as a manifestation of Suchness, we are here beset with the most puzzling questions that have baffled the best minds ever since the dawn of intellect. They are: Why did Suchness ever leave its abode in the mysterious realm of transcendentality and descend on earth where every form of misery greets us on all sides? What inherent necessity was there for it to mingle in the dust of worldliness while it could enjoy the unspeakable bliss of its own absoluteness? In other words, why did absolute Suchness ever become conditional Suchness? To dispose of these questions as not concerning human interests is the creed of agnosticism and positivism, but the fact is, they are not questions whimsically framed by the human mind when it was in the mood of playing with itself. They are queries of the most vital importance ever put to us, and the significance of life entirely hangs on our interpretation of them.

Buddhism confesses that the mystery is unsolvable purely by the human mind, for it is absolutely beyond the region of finite intellect and the power of a logical demonstrability. The mystery can only be solved in a practical way when we attain the highest spiritual enlightenment of Buddhahood, in which the Bodhi with its unimpeded supernatural light directly looks into the very abyss of Suchness. The Bodhi or Intelligence which constitutes the kernel of our being, is a partial realisation in us of Suchness. When this intelligence is merged and expands in the Body of Suchness, as the water in a vessel poured into the waters of the boundless ocean, it at once perceives and realises its nature, its destiny, and its significance in life.

Buddhism is a religion and leaves many topics of metaphysics unsolved at least logically. Though it is more intellectual and philosophical than any other religion it does not pretend to build a complete system of speculation. As far as theorisation is concerned, Buddhism is dogmatic and assumes many propositions without revealing their dialectical processes. But they are all necessary and fundamental hypotheses of the religious consciousness, they are the ultimate demands of the human soul. Religion has no positive obligation to prove its propositions after the fashion of the natural sciences. It is enough for religion to state the facts as they are, and the intellect though hampered by limitations inherent in it, has to try her best to put them together in a coherent system.

The solution, then, by Buddhism of those queries stated above cannot be said to be very logical and free from serious difficulties, but practically it serves all required purposes and is conducive to religious discipline. By this I mean the Buddhist theory of Nescience or Ignorance (*avidyā*)

Theory of Ignorance

• The theory of nescience or ignorance (*avidyā*) is an attempt by Buddhists to solve the relation between the one and the many, between absolute Suchness and conditional Suchness, between Dharmakāya and Sarvasattva, between wisdom (*bodhi*) and sin (*kleśa*), between Nirvāṇa and Samsāra. But Buddhism does not give us any systematic exposition of the doctrine. What it says is categorical and dogmatic. 'This universe is really the Dharmadhātu,'¹ it is characterised by sameness (*samata*), there is no differentiation (*viśama*) in it, it is even emptiness itself (*gūṇyata*) all things have no *pudgala* (self). But because of nescience, there are four or six *mahabhūta* (elements), five *skandha* (aggregates) six (or eight) *vijnana* (senses), and twelve *nidana* (chains of causation). All these names and forms (*namarūpa*) are of nescience or ignorance. Or, according to Aṣvaghosa, 'The Heart of Suchness is the vast All of one Dharmadhātu it is the essence of all doctrines. The² ultimate nature does not perish nor does it

Dharmadhātu is the world as seen by an enlightened mind where all forms of particularity do not contradict one another but make one harmonious whole

decay. All particular objects exist because of confused subjectivity (*smṛti*)¹ Independent of confused subjectivity, there is no outside world to be perceived and discriminated: "Everything that is subject to the law of birth and death exists only because of ignorance and karma." Such statements as these are found almost everywhere in the Buddhist literature; but as to the question how and why this negative principle of ignorance came to assert itself in the body of Suchness, we are at a loss where to find an authoritative and definite answer to it.

One thing, however, is certain, which is this: Ignorance (*avidyā*) is principium individuum, that creates the multitudinousness of phenomena in the absolute oneness of being, that tosses up the roaring billows of existence in the eternal ocean of Suchness, that breaks the silence of Nirvāna and starts the wheel of metempsychosis perpetually rolling, that, veiling the transpicuous mirror of Bodhi, affects the reflection of Suchness therein, that transforms the sameness (*samātā*) of Suchness to the duality of thisness and thatness and leads many confused minds to egoism with all its pernicious corollaries

Perhaps, the best way to attack the problem of ignorance is to understand that Buddhism is a thoroughly idealistic doctrine as every true religion should be, and that psychologically, and not ontologic-

¹The word literally means recollection or memory. Aṣva-ghosa uses it as a synonym of ignorance, and so do many other Buddhist philosophers.

ally, should Suchness be conceived, and further, that nescience is inherent in Suchness, though only hypothetically, illusively, apparently, and not really in any sense.

According to Brahmanism, there was in the beginning only one being, and this being willed to be two; which naturally resulted in the differentiation of subject and object, mind and nature In Buddhism, however, Suchness is not explicitly stated as having had any desire to be other than itself, at least when it is purely metaphysically conceived. But as Buddhism interprets this world of particularisation as a manifestation of Suchness conditioned by the principle of ignorance, ignorance must be considered, however illusory in its ultimate nature to have potentially or rather negatively existed in the being of Suchness, and when Suchness, by its transcendental freedom of will, affirmed itself, it did so by negating itself, that is, by permitting itself to be conditioned by the principle of ignorance or individuation. The latter, as is expressly stated everywhere in Buddhist sūtras and śāstras, is no more than an illusion and a negative quantity, it is merely the veil of Māya. This chimerical nature of ignorance preserves the essential absoluteness of the first principle and makes the monism of the Mahāyāna doctrine thoroughly consistent. What is to be noted here, however, is this. Buddhism does not necessarily regard this world of particulars as altogether evanescent and dream-like. When ignorance alone is taken notice

of and the presence of Suchness in all this multitudinousness of things is denied, this existence is positively declared to be void. But when an enlightened mind perceives Suchness even in the midst of the utter darkness of ignorance, this life assumes an entirely new aspect, and we come to realise the illusiveness of all evils.

To return to the subject, ignorance or nescience is defined by Aṣvaghosa as a spark of consciousness¹ that spontaneously flashes from the unfathomable depths of Suchness. According to this, ignorance and consciousness are interchangeable terms, though with different shades of meaning. Ignorance is, so to speak, the *raison d'être* of consciousness, is that which makes the appearance of the latter possible, while ignorance itself is in turn an illusive emanation of Suchness. It is then evident that the awakening of consciousness marks the first step toward the rising of this universe from the abyss of the self-identity of Suchness. For the unfolding of consciousness implies the separation of the perceiving and the perceived, the *viṣayin* and the *viśaya*, of subject and object, mind and nature.

The eternal abyss of Suchness, so called, is the point where subjectivity and objectivity are merged in absolute oneness. It is the time, though strictly

¹ *Smṛti* or *citta* or *vyñāna*. They are all used by Aṣvaghosa and other Buddhist authors as synonymous. *Smṛti* literally means memory, *citta* thought or mentation, and *vyñāna* is generally rendered by consciousness though not very accurately.

speaking chronology does not apply here, when all "the ten thousand things" of the world have not yet been differentiated and even when the God who "created the heaven and earth" has not yet made his debut. To use psychological terms, it is a state of transcendental or transmarginal consciousness, where all sense-perceptions and conceptual images vanish, and where we are in a state of absolute unconsciousness. This sounds mystical, but it is an established fact that in the field of our mental activities there is an abyss where consciousness sometimes suddenly disappears. This region beyond the threshold of awareness, though often a trysting place for psychical abnormalities, has a great religious significance, which cannot be ignored by superficial scientific arguments. Here is the region where the consciousness of subject and object is completely annihilated, but here we do not have the silence and darkness of a grave, nor is it a state of absolute nothingness. The self is here lost in the presence of something indescribable, or better, it expands so as to embrace the world all within itself, and is not conscious of any egoistic elation or arrogance, but it merely feels the fulness of reality and a touch of celestial joy that cannot be imparted to others by anything human. The most convincing spiritual insight into the nature of being comes from this source. Enlightenment is the name given by Buddhists to the actual gaining of this insight. Bodhi* or Prajñā or intelligence is the term for the

spiritual power that brings about this enlightenment

When the mind emerges from this state of sameness, consciousness spontaneously comes back as it vanished before, retaining the memory of the Experience so unique and now confronting the world of contrasts and mutual dependence, in which our empirical ego moves. The transition from one state to the other is like a flash of lightning scintillating from behind the clouds, though the two, the subliminal and the superficial consciousness, seem to be one continuous form of activity, permitting no hiatus between them. At any rate, this awakening of subjectivity and the leaving behind of transmarginal consciousness marks the start of ignorance. Therefore, psychologically speaking, ignorance must be considered synonymous with the awakening of consciousness in a sentient being.

Here we have the most mysterious fact that baffles all our intellectual efforts to unravel, which is: How and why has ignorance, or what is tantamount, consciousness, ever been awakened from the absolute calmness (*śanti*) of being? How and why have the waves of mentation ever been stirred up in the ocean of eternal tranquility? Aṣvaghosa simply says, "spontaneously." This by no means explains anything, or at least it is not in the line with our so called scientific interpretations, nor does it give us any reason why. Nevertheless, religiously and practically viewed, "spontaneous" is the most graphic and vigorous term there is for describing the actual state of things.

as they pass before our mental eye. In fact, there is always something vague and indefinite in all our psychological experiences. With whatever scientific accuracy, with whatever objective precision we may describe the phenomena that take place in the mind, there is always something that eludes our scrutiny, is too slippery, as it were, to take hold of, so that after all our strenuous intellectual efforts to be exact and perspicuous in our expositions, we are still compelled to leave much to the imagination of the reader. In case he happens to be lacking in the experience which we have endeavored to describe we shall vainly hope to awaken in him the said impression with the same degree of intensity and realness.

It is for this reason that Aṣṣvaghosa and other Mahāyānist declare that the rising of consciousness out of the abysmal depths of Suchness is *felt* by Buddhas and other enlightened minds only that have actually gone through the experience. The why of ignorance nobody can explain as much as the why of Suchness. But when we personally experience this spiritual fact, we no more feel the need of harboring any doubt about how or why. Everything becomes transparent and the rays of supernatural enlightenment shine like a halo round our spiritual personality. We move as dictated by the behest of Suchness, i. e., by the Dharmakāya, and in which we feel infinite bliss and satisfaction. This religious experience is the most unique phenomenon in the life of a sentient being.

Dualism and Moral Evil

As we cannot think that the essence of the external world to be other than that of our own mind, that is to say, as we cannot think subject and object to be different in their ultimate nature, our conclusion naturally is that the same principle of Ignorance which gathers the clouds of subjectivity, calls up the multitudinousness of phenomena in the world-mind of Suchness. The universe in its entirety is an infinite mind, and our limited mind with its transmarginal consciousness is a microcosm. What the finite mind feels in its inmost self, must also be what the cosmic mind feels, nay, we can go one step further, and say that when the human mind enters the region lying beyond the border of subjectivity and objectivity, it is in communion with the heart of the universe, whose secrets are revealed here without reserve. Therefore, Buddhism does not make any distinction between knowing and being, enlightenment and Suchness. When the mind is free from ignorance and no more clings to things particular, it is said to be in harmony and even one with Suchness.

We must, however, remember that ignorance as the principle of individuation and a spontaneous expression of Suchness, is no moral evil. The awakening of subjectivity or the dawn of consciousness forms part of the necessary cosmic process. The separation of subject and object, or the appearance of a phenomenal world, is nothing but a realisation,

of the cosmic mind (Dharmakāya) • As such Ignorance performs an essential function in the evolution of the world totality Ignorance is inherent in Buddhas as well as in all sentient beings Every one of us cannot help perceiving an external world (*visaya*) and forming conceptions and reasoning and feeling and willing We do not see any moral fault here If there is really anything morally wrong, then we cannot do anything with it, we are utterly helpless before it, for it is not our fault, but that of the cosmic soul from which and in which we have our being.

Ignorance has produced everywhere a state of relativity and reciprocal dependence Birth is inseparably linked with death, congregation with segregation, evolution with involution, attraction with repulsion, the centripetal with the centrifugal force, the spring with the fall, the tide with the ebb, joy with sorrow, God with Satan, Adam with Eve, Buddha with Devadatta, etc , ect , *ad infinitum* These are necessary conditions of existence, and if existence is an evil, they must be abolished, and with their abolition the very reason of existence is abolished, which means absolute nothingness, an impossibility as long as we exist The work of ignorance in the world of conditional Suchness is quite innocent, and Buddhists do not recognise any fault in its existence, if not contaminated by confused subjectivity Those who speak of the curse of existence, or those who conceive Nirvāna to be the abode of non existence

and the happiness of absolute annihilation, are considered by Buddhists to be unable to understand the significance of Ignorance

Is there then no fault to be found with Ignorance?
Not in Ignorance itself, but in our defiled attachment
to it, that is, when we are ignorant of Ignorance
It is wrong to cling to the dualism of subject and
object as final and act accordingly It is wrong to
 take the work of ignorance as ultimate and to
 forget the foundation on which it stands It is wrong,
 thinking that the awakening of consciousness reveals
 the whole world, to ignore the existence of unseen
 realities In short, evils quickly follow our steps
 when we try to realise the conclusions of ignorance
 without knowing its true relation to Suchness
 Egoism is the most fundamental of all errors and evils

When we speak of ignorance as hindering the
 light of intelligence from penetrating to the bottom
 of reality, we usually understand the term ignorance
 not in the philosophical sense of principium individuum,
 but in the sense of confused subjectivity, which
 conceives the work of Ignorance as the final reality
 culminating in egoism So, we might say that while
 the principle of Ignorance is philosophically justified,
 its unenlightened actualisation in our practical life
 is altogether unwarranted and brings on us a series
 of dire calamities

CHAPTER VI

THE TATHĀGATA-GARBHA AND THE ĀLAYA-VIJÑĀNA.

• **SUCHNESS** (*Bhūtatathātā*), the ultimate principle of existence, is known by so many different names, as it is viewed in so many different phases of its manifestation. Suchness is the Essence of Buddhas, as it constitutes the reason of Buddhahood, it is the Dharma, when it is considered the norm of existence, it is the Bodhi when it is the source of intelligence, Nirvana, when it brings eternal peace to a heart troubled with egoism and its vile passions, Prajñā (wisdom), when it intelligently directs the course of nature, the Dharmakāya, when it is religiously considered as the fountain head of love and wisdom, the Bodhicitta (intelligence-heart), when it is the awakener of religious consciousness, Çūnyatā (vacuity), when viewed as transcending all particular forms, the summum bonum (*kuṣālam*), when its ethical phase is emphasised, the Highest Truth (*paramārtha*), when its epistemological feature is put forward, the Middle Path (*mādhyamārga*) when it is considered above the onesidedness and limitation of individual existences, the Essence of Being (*bhūtakoti*), when its ontological aspect is taken into

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dental soul or pure intelligence is now influenced by the principle of birth and death and subjects itself to organic determinations. As it is, it is yet devoid of differentiation and limitation, save that there is a bare possibility of them. It will, however, as soon as it is actualised in a special form, unfold all its particularities subject to their own laws, it will hunger, desire, strive, and even be annoyed by its material bonds, and then, beginning to long for liberation, will struggle inwardly. Here is then no more of the absolute freedom of Suchness, as long as its phenomenal phase alone is considered, since the Garbha works under the constraint of particularisation. The essence of Tathâgatahood, however, is here preserved intact, and, whenever it is possible, our finite minds are able to feel its presence and power. Hypothetically, therefore, the Garbha is always in association with passions and desires that are of Ignorance.

We read in the *Āgama Sûtra* "With the storage of passions attached we find the Tathâgata Garbha," or, "The Dharmakâya of the Tathâgata not detached from the storage of passions is called Tathâgata-Garbha." In Buddhism, passion or desire or sin (*kleśa*) is generally used in contrast to intelligence or Bodhi or Nirvâna. As the latter, religiously considered, represents a particular manifestation in the human mind, of the Dharmakâya or Bhûtatathâtâ, so the former is a reflection of universal Ignorance in the microcosm. Therefore, the human soul in which, according to Buddhism, intelligence and desire are merged, should

be regarded as an individuation of the Tathāgata-Garbha. And it is in this capacity that the Garbha is called *Ālayavyñāna*

The Ālayavyñāna and its Evolution

As we have seen the Ālayavyñāna or All Conserving Soul is a particularised expression in the human mind of the Tathāgata Garbha. It is an individual, ideal reflex of the cosmic Garbha. It is this "psychic germ," as the Ālaya is often designated, that stores all the mental possibilities, which are set in motion by the impetus of an external world, which works on the Ālaya through the six senses (*vyñāna*)

Mahāyānism is essentially idealistic and does not make a radical, qualitative distinction between subject and object thought and being, mind and nature, consciousness and energy. Therefore, the being and activity of the Ālaya are essentially those of the Garbha, and again, as the Garbha is the joint creation of universal Ignorance and Suchness, so is the Ālaya the product of desire (*kleśa*) and wisdom (*bodhi*). The Garbha and the Ālaya, however, are each in itself innocent and absolutely irresponsible for the existing state of affairs. And let it be remarked here that Buddhism does not condemn this life and universe for their wickedness as was done by some religious teachers and philosophers. The so-called wickedness is not radical in nature and life. It is merely superficial. It is the work of ignorance and desire, and when they are converted to do service for the,

Bodhi, they cease to be wicked or sinful or evil Buddhists, therefore, strongly insist on the innate and intrinsic goodness of the Ālaya and the Garbha

Says Aṣvaghosa in his *Awakening of Faith* (p. 75) "In the All Conserving Soul (Ālaya) Ignorance obtains, and from non enlightenment [thus produced] starts that which sees, that which represents, that which apprehends an objective world, and that which constantly particularises " Here we have the evolution of the Garbha in its psychological manifestation, in other words, we have here the evolution of the Ālayavijñāna When the Garbha or Ālaya comes under the influence of birth-and death (*samsāra*), it no longer retains its primeval indifference or sameness (*samatā*), but there come to exist that which sees (*visayin*) and that which is seen (*visaya*), a mind and an objective world From the interaction of these two forms of existence, we have now before our eyes the entire panorama of the universe swiftly and noiselessly moving with its never-tiring steps A most favorite simile with Buddhists to illustrate these incessant activities of the phenomenal world, is to compare them to the waves that are seen forever rolling in a boundless ocean, while the body of waters which make up the ocean is compared to Suchness, and the wind that stirs up the waves to the principle of birth-and death or ignorance which is the same thing So we read in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*

✓/ ' Like unto the ocean waves
Which by a raging storm maddened
Against the rugged precipice strike
Without interruption
Even so in the Alaya sea
Stirred by the objectivity wind
All kinds of mentation waves
Arise a dancing a rolling ¹

But all the psychical activities thus brought into full view, should not be conceived as different from the Mind (*citta*) itself. It is merely in the nature of our understanding that we think of attributes apart from their substance the latter being imagined to be in possession and control of the former. There is, however, in fact no substance *per se*, independent of its attributes, and no attributes detached from that which unites them. And this is one of the fundamental conceptions of Buddhism, that there is no soul in itself considered apart from its various manifestations such as imagination, sensation, intellectuation, etc. The innumerable ripples and waves and billows of mentation that are stirred in the depths of the *Tathâgata Garbha*, are not things foreign or external to it, but they are all particular expressions of the same essence they are working out its immanent destiny. So continues the *Lankavatara Sutra*

¹ This is translated from the Chinese of Çikṣananda the Sanskrit reads as follows

Tarângâ hi udadher yadvat pavanapratyaya iringâ
Nṛtyamânâh pravartante vyucchedaḥ ca na vidhyate
Âlayodhyas tathâ nityam viśayapavana ī itah
Cittâis tarangaviññanâir nṛtyamanâh pravartate²

'The saline crystal and its red bluishness
 The milky sap and its sweetness,
 Various flowers and their fruits,
 The sun and the moon and their luminosity
 These are neither separable nor inseparable.
 As waves are stirred in the water
 Even so the seven modes of mentation
 Are awakened in the Mind and united with it
 When the waters are troubled in the ocean,
 We have waves that roll each in its own way
 So with the Mind All Conserving
 When stirred therein diverse mentations arise
 Citta, Manas and Manovijnāna
 These we distinguish as attributes,
 In substance they differ not from each other,
 For they are neither attributing nor attributed
 The sea water and the waves
 One varies not from the other
 It is even so with the Mind and its activities,
 Between them difference nowhere obtains
 Citta is karma accumulating
 Manas reflects an objective world
 Manovijnāna is the faculty of judgment,
 The five Vijnānas are the differentiating senses ¹

¹ From the Chinese The Sanskrit reads as follows
 Nile rakte tha lavane çankhe ksire ca çārkare
 Kasayāḥ phalapuṣpādyāḥ kiraṇā yatha bhāskare
 No nyena ca nānanyena tarangā hi udadher matā
 Vijnānāni tathā sapta cittena saha samyuktā
 Udadheḥ parināmo sū tarangānām vicitratā,
 Ālayam hi tatha cittam vijnānākhyam pravartate
 Cittam maṇaḥ ca vijnānam laksapārtham prakalpyate
 Ābhinnā lakṣanā hi astāu na lakṣyā na ca lakṣanā
 Udadheḥ ca tarangānām yathā nāsti viçeṣanā
 Vijnānānam tathā citte pariṇāmo na labhyate
 Cittena cīyaṭe karmāḥ manasā ca viciyate,
 Vijñāṇena vijñānāti, dr̥ṣyam kalpeti pancabhiḥ

The Manas

The Ālayavijñāna which is sometimes, as in the preceding quotations, simply called *citta* (mind), is, as such, no more than a state of Suchness, allowing itself to be influenced by the principle of birth and death, i. e., by Ignorance, and there has in it taken place as yet no "awakening" or "stirring up" (*virṭi*), from which results a consciousness. When the Manas is evolved, however, we have a sign of mentality thereby set in motion, for the Manas, according to the Mahāyānists, marks the dawn of consciousness in the universe.

The Manas, deriving its reason of consciousness from the Citta or Ālaya, reflects on it as well as on an external world, and becomes conscious of the distinction between me and not me. But since this not I or external world is nothing but an unfoldment of the Ālaya itself, the Manas must be said really to be self-reflecting, when it discriminates between subject and object. If the Ālaya is not yet conscious of itself, the Manas is, as the latter comes to realise the state of self awareness. The Ālaya is perhaps to be compared in a sense to the Kantian "ego of transcendental apperception", while the Manas is the actual center of self consciousness. But the Manas and the Ālaya (or Citta) are not two different things in the sense that one emanates from the other or that one is created by the other. It is better to under-

stand the Manas as a state or condition of the Citta in its evolution

Now, the Manas is not only contemplative, but capable of volition. It awakens the desire to cling to the state of individuation, it harbors egoism, passion, and prejudice, it wills and creates for Ignorance, the principle of birth-and death is there in its full force, and the absolute identity of Suchness is here forever departed. Therefore, the Manas really marks the beginning of concrete, particularising consciousness waves in the eternal ocean of the All-Conserving Mind. The mind which was hitherto indifferent and neutral here acquires a full consciousness, discriminates between ego and non ego, feels pain and pleasure, clings to that which is agreeable and shrinks from that which is disagreeable, urges activities according to judgments, false or truthful, memorises what has been experienced, and stores it all — in short, all the modes of mentation come into play with the awakening of the Manas.

According to Aṣvaghosa with the evolution of the Manas there arise five important psychological activities which characterise the human mind. They are (1) motility, that is the capability of creating karma, (2) the power to perceive, (3) the power to respond, (4) the power to discriminate, and (5) individuality. Through the exercise of these five functions, the Manas is able to create according to its will, to be a perceiving subject, to respond to the stimuli of an external world, to deliver judgments

over what it likes and what it dislikes, and finally to retain all its own "karma-seeds" in the past and to mature them for the future, according to circumstances

With the advent of the Manas, the evolution of the Citta is complete. Practically, it is the consummation of mentality, for self consciousness is ripe now. The will can affirm its ego-centric, dualistic activities, and the intellect can exercise its discriminating, reasoning, and image retaining faculties. The Manas now becomes the center of psychic coördination. It receives messages from the six senses and pronounces over the impressions whatever judgments, intellectual or volitional, which are needed at the time for its own conservation. It also reflects on its own sanctum, and, perceiving there the presence of the *Ālaya*, wrongfully jumps to the conclusion that herein lies the real, ultimate ego soul, from which it derives the notions of authority, unity, and permanency.

As is evident, the Manas is a double edged sword. It may destroy itself by clinging to the error of ego-conception, or it may, by a judicious exercise of its reasoning faculty, destroy all the misconceptions that arise from a wrong interpretation of the principle of Ignorance. The Manas destroys itself by being overwhelmed by the dualism of *ego* and *alter*, by taking them for final, irreducible realities, and by thus fostering absolute ego centric thoughts and desires, and by making itself a willing prey of an indomitable egoism, religiously and morally. On the other hand, when it

sees an error in the conception of the absolute reality of individuals, when it perceives a play of Ignorance in the dualism of me and not-me, when it recognises the *raison d'être* of existence in the essence of Tathāgatahood, i.e., in Suchness, when it realises that the Ālaya which is mistaken for the ego is no more than an innocent and irreproachable reflection of the cosmic Garbha, it at once transcends the sphere of particularity and becomes the very harbinger of eternal enlightenment

Buddhists, therefore, do not see any error or evil in the evolution of the Mind (*ālaya*) There is nothing faulty in the awakening of consciousness, in the dualism of subject and object, in the individualising operation of birth and death (*samsāra*) only so long as our Manas keeps aloof from the contamination of false egoism The gravest error, however, permeates every fiber of our mind with all its wickedness and irrationality as soon as the nature of the evolution of the Ālaya is wrongfully interpreted by the abuse of the functions of the Manas ¹

¹ A little digression here It has frequently been affirmed of the ethics of Mahāyānism that as it has a nihilistic tendency its morality turns towards asceticism ignoring the significance of the sentiment and instinct It is true that Mahāyānism perfectly agrees with Vedantism when the latter declares "If the killer thinks that he kills if the killed thinks that he is killed they do not understand for this one does not kill nor is that one killed (*The Katopanishad* II 19) This belief in non action (Laotzean *Wu Wei*) apparently denies the existence of a world of relativity but he will be a superficial critic who will stop short at this absolute aspect of Mahayana

Though Mahāyānism most emphatically denies the existence of a personal ego which is imagined to be lodging within the body and to be the spiritual master of it, it does not necessarily follow that it denies the unity of consciousness or personality or individuality. In fact, the assumption of Manovijñāna by Buddhists most conclusively proves that they have an ego in a sense, the denial of whose empirical existence is tantamount to the denial of the most concrete facts of our daily experiences. What is most persistently negated by them is not the existence of ego, but its final, ultimate reality. But to discuss this subject more fully we have a special chapter below devoted to "Ātman"

The Sāṃkhya Philosophy and Mahāyānism

If we draw a comparison between the Sāṃkhya philosophy and Mahāyānism, the Ālayavijñāna may

philosophy and refuses to consider its practical side. As we have seen above, Buddhists do not conceive the evolution of the Manovijñāna as a fault on the part of the cosmic mind, nor do they think the assertion of Ignorance altogether wrong and morally evil. Therefore, Mahāyānism does not deny the claim of reality to the world of the senses, though of course relatively, and not absolutely.

Again, "Tat tvam asi (thou art it) or "I am the Buddha" — this assertion, though arrogant it may seem to some, is perfectly justifiable in the realm of absolute identity, where the serene light of Suchness alone pervades. But when we descend on earth and commingle in the hurly-burly of our practical, dualistic life, we cannot help suffering from its mundane limitations. We hunger, we thirst, we grieve at the loss of the dearest, we feel remorse over errors committed

be considered an unification of Soul (*purusa*) and Nature (*prakṛti*), and the Manovijñāna a combination of Buddha (intellect) or Mahat (great element) with Ahankāra (ego) According to the *Sāmkhyakārika* (11), the essential nature of Prakṛti is the power of creation, or, to use Buddhist phraseology, it is blind activity, while that of Purusa is witnessing (*sakṣitvā*) and perceiving (*drasṭṛtvā*) (*The Kārika*, 19) A modern philosopher would say, Purusa is intelligence and Prakṛti the will, and when they are combined and blended in one, they make Hartmann's *Unbewusste Geist* (unconscious spirit) The All-Conserving Mind (*Ālaya*) in a certain sense resembles the Unconscious, as it is the manifestation of Suchness, the principle of enlightenment, in its evolutionary aspect as conditioned by Ignorance, and Ignorance apparently

Mahāyānism does not teach the annihilation of those human passions and feelings

There was once a recluse philosopher who was considered by the villagers to have completely vanquished all natural desires and human ambitions They almost worshipped him and thought him to be superhuman One day early in Winter, a devotee approached him and reverentially inquired after his health The sage at once responded in verse

'A hermit truly I am world renounced
Yet when the ground is white with snow
A chill goes through me and I shiver

A false conception of religious sameness as cherished by so many pious hearted, but withal ignorant, minds has led them into some of the grossest superstitions, whose curse is still lingering even among us Our earthly life has so many limitations and tribulations The ills that the flesh is heir to must be relieved by some material, scientific methods

corresponds to the will as the principle of blind activity. The Sāṃkhya philosophy is an avowed dualism and permits the existence of two principles independent of each other. Mahāyānism is fundamentally monistic and makes Ignorance merely a condition necessary to the unfolding of Suchness.¹ Therefore, what the Sāṃkhya splits into two, Mahāyānism puts together in one.

So is the parallelism between the Manovijñāna, and Buddhi and Ahankāra. Buddhi, intellect, is defined as *adhyavasāya* (*Kārika*, 23), while Ahankāra is interpreted as *abhimānas* (*Kārika*, 24), which is evidently self-consciousness. As to the exact meaning of *adhyavasāya*, there is a divergence of opinion. "ascertainment," "judgment," "determination," "apprehension" are some of the English equivalents chosen for it. But the inner signification of Buddhi is clear enough, it indicates the awakening of knowledge, the dawn of rationality, the first shedding of light on the dark recesses of unconsciousness, so the commentators give as the synonyms *mati* (understanding), *khyāti* (cognition), *jñānam*, *prajñā*, etc., the last two of these, which mean knowledge or intelligence, being also technical terms of Mahāyānism. And, as we have seen above, these senses are what the Buddhists give to their Manovijñāna, save that the

¹ That the Buddhist Ignorance corresponds to the Sāṃkhya Prakṛti can be seen also from the fact that some Sāṃkhya commentators give to Prakṛti as its synonyms such terms as *śakti* (energy) which reminds of karma or *śankāra* *taṃas* (darkness), *māyā*, and even the very word *avidyā* (ignorance).

religious systems, is the most conclusive proof that things on this earth are in a constant flux of becoming, and that there is nothing permanent or stationary in our individual existences, if otherwise, people would never have sought for immortality.

If this be granted as a fact of our everyday experience, we naturally ask "Why are things so changeable? Why is life so fleeting? What is it that makes things so mutable and transitory?" To this, the Buddhist's answer is "Because the universe is a resultant product of many efficient forces that are acting according to different karmas, — the destiny of those forces being that no one force or no one set of forces can constantly be predominant over all the others but that when one has exhausted its potential karma, it is replaced by another that has been steadily coming forward in the meantime. Hence the universal cadence of birth and death, of the spring and the fall, of the tide and the ebb, of integration and disintegration. Where there is attraction, there is repulsion, where there is the centripetal force, there is the centrifugal force. Because it is the law of karma that at the very moment of birth the arms of death are around the neck of life. The universe is nothing but a grand rhythmic manifestation of certain forces working in conformity to their predetermined laws, or, to use Buddhist terminology, this *lokadhātu* (material world) consists in a concatenation of *hetus* (causes) and *pratyayas* (conditions) regulated by their karma."

If this were not so, there would be either a certain fixed state of things in which perfect equilibrium would be maintained, or an inexpressible confusion of things of which no knowledge or experience would be possible. In the former case, we should have universal stagnation and eternal death, in the latter case, there would be no universe, no life, nothing but absolute chaos. Therefore, so long as we have the world before us, in which all the possible varieties of particularisation are manifested it cannot be otherwise than in a state of constant vicissitudes and therefore of universal transitoriness.

Now, the Buddhist argument for the theory of non-ego is this. If individual existences are due to relations obtaining between diverse forces, which act sometimes in unison with and sometimes in opposition to one another as predetermined by their karma, they cannot be said to have any transcendental agency behind them, which is a permanent unity and absolute dictator. In other words, there is no *âtman* or ego soul behind our mental activities, and no thing-in-itself (*svabhâva*), so to speak, behind each particular form of existence. This is called the Buddhist theory of non *âtman* or non ego.

Âtman

Buddhists use the term "âtman" in two senses | first, in the sense of personal ego,¹ and secondly in |

¹ *Pudgala* or *pudgalasamjñā* is sometimes used by Mahāyānists, as a synonym of *âtman*. The Buddhist *âtman* in the

CHAPTER VII.

THE THEORY OF NON-ATMAN OR NON-EGO

IF I am requested to formulate the ground-principles of the philosophy of Mahâyâna Buddhism, and, indeed, of all the schools of Buddhism, I would suggest the following

- (1) All is momentary (*sarvam kṣaṇikam*),
- (2) All is empty (*sarvam śūnyam*)
- (3) All is without self (*sarvam anâtman*)
- (4) All is such as it is (*sarvam tathâtvaṃ*)

These four tenets, as it were, are so closely inter-related that, stand or fall, they all inevitably share one and the same fate together. Whatever different views the various schools of Buddhism may hold on points of minor importance, they all concur at least on these four principal propositions.

Of these four propositions, the first, the second, and the fourth have been elucidated above, more or less explicitly. If the existence of a relative world is the work of ignorance and as such has no final reality, it must be considered illusory and empty, though it does not necessarily follow that on this account our life is not worth living. We must not

confuse the moral value of existence with the ontological problem of its phenomenality. It all depends on our subjective attitude whether or not our world and life become full of significance. When the illusiveness or phenomenality of individual existences is granted and we use the world accordingly, that is, "as not abusing it," we escape the error and curse of egoism and take things as they are presented to us, as reflecting the Dharma of Suchness. We no more cling to forms of particularity as something ultimate and absolutely real and as that in which lies the essence of our life. We take them for such as they are and recognise their reality only in so far as they are considered a partial realisation of Suchness and do not go any further. Suchness, indeed, lies not hidden *behind* them but exists immanently *in* them. Things are empty and illusory so long as they are particular things and are not thought of in reference to the All that is Suchness and Reality.

From this it logically follows that in this world of relativity all is momentary, that nothing is permanent, so far as isolated particular existences are concerned. Even independently of the statement made above, the doctrine of universal impermanency is an almost self-evident truth experienced everywhere, and does not require any special demonstration to prove its validity. The desire for immortality which is so conspicuous and persistent in all the stages of development of the religious consciousness that the very desire has been thought to be the essence of all

that of thing in itself, perhaps, with a slight modification of its commonly accepted meaning. Let us use the term *âtman* here in its first sense as equivalent to *bhutatman*, for we are going first to treat of the doctrine of non ego and later of that of no thing-in itself.

Âtman is usually translated 'life ego' or 'soul' and is a technical term used both by Vedanta philosophers and Buddhists. But we have to note at the beginning that they do not use the term in the same sense. When the Vedanta philosophy, especially the later one, speaks of *âtman* as our inmost self which is identical with the universal *Brahma* it is used in its most abstract metaphysical sense and does not mean the soul whatever as the latter is sense of ego substratum may be considered to correspond to the Vedantist *jivâtman* which is used in contradistinction to *Paramatman* the supreme being or *Brahma*.

¹ Mahâyâna Buddhists generally understand the essential characteristic of *âtman* to consist in freedom and by freedom they mean eternity, absolute unity and supreme authority. A being that is transitory is not free as it is conditioned by other beings and therefore it has no *âtman*. A being that is an aggregate of elemental matter or forms of energy is not absolute for it is a state of mutual relationship and therefore it has no *âtman*. Again a being that has no authoritative command over itself and other beings is not free for it will be subjected to a power other than itself and therefore it has no *âtman*. Now take anything that we come across in this world of particulars and does it not possess one or all of these three qualities: transitoriness, compositeness and helplessness or dependence? Therefore all concrete individual existences not excepting human beings have no *âtman* have no ego that is eternal, absolute and supreme.

commonly understood by vulgar minds On the other hand, Buddhists understand by *âtman* this vulgar, materialistic conception of the soul (*bhûtâtman*) and positively denies its existence as such If we, for convenience sake, distinguish between phenomenal and noumenal in our notion of ego or soul, the *âtman* of Buddhism is the phenomenal ego, namely, a concrete agent that is supposed to do the acting, thinking, and feeling, while the *âtman* of Vedantists is the noumenal ego as the *raison d'être* of our psychical life. The one is in fact material, however ethereal it might be conceived The other is a highly metaphysical conception transcending the reach of human discursive knowledge The latter may be identified with *Paramâtman* and the former with *Jivâtman* *Paramâtman* is a universal soul from which, according to Vedantism, emanates this world of phenomena, and in a certain sense it may be said to correspond to the Tathâgata garbha of Buddhism *Jivâtman* is the ego soul as it is conceived by ignorant people as an independent entity directing all the mental activities It is this latter *âtman* that was found to be void by Buddha when he arose from his long meditation, declaring

Many a life to transmigrate
Long quest no rest hath been my fate
Tent designer ' inquisitive for
Painful birth from state to state

' Tent designer is a figurative term for the ego soul Following the prevalent error, the Buddha at first made an

'Tent designer' I know thee now
 Never again to build art thou
 Quite out are all thy joyful fires
 Rafter broken and roof tree gone
 Gain eternity—dead desires¹

Buddha's First Line of Inquiry

Buddhism finds the source of all evils and sufferings in the vulgar material conception of the ego soul, and concentrates its entire ethical force upon the destruction of the ego centric notions and desires. The Buddha seems, since the beginning of his wandering life, to have conceived the idea that the way of salvation must lie somehow in the removal of this egoistic prejudice, for so long as we are not liberated from its curse we are liable to become the prey of the three venomous passions—covetousness, infatuation, and anger, and to suffer the misery of birth and death and disease and old age. Thus, when he received his first instructions from the Sāṃkhya philosopher, Arada, he was not satisfied, because he did not teach how to abandon this ego soul itself. The Buddha argued: "I consider that the embodied ego soul though freed from the evolvent evolutes,"

earnest search after the ego that was supposed to be snugly sitting behind our mental experiences and the result was this utterance:

¹ *The Dharmapada* vs 153—154 Tr by A. J. Edmunds

² *Prakṛti-vikṛtayas*. This is a technical term of Sāṃkhya philosophy and means the modes of Prakṛti as evolved from it and as further evolving on. See Satish Chandra Banarji *Sāṃkhya Philosophy* p. XXIII et seq.

is still subject to the condition of birth and has the condition of a seed. The seed may remain dormant so long as it is deprived of the opportunity of coming into contact with the requisite conditions of quickening and being quickened, but since its germinating power has not been destroyed, it will surely develop all its potentialities as soon as it is brought into that necessary contact. Even though the ego-soul free from entanglement [i. e. from the bondage of *Praṛti*] is declared to be liberated, yet, so long as the ego-soul remains, there can be no absolute abandonment of it, there can be no real abandonment of egoism.¹

The Buddha then proceeds to indicate the path through which he reached his final conclusion and declares "There is no real separation of the qualities and their subject, for fire cannot be conceived apart from its heat and form. When this argument is logically carried out, it leads nowhere but to the Buddhist doctrine of non-*ātman*, that says The existence of an ego soul cannot be conceived apart from sensation, perception, imagination, intelligence, volition, etc., and, therefore it is absurd to think that there is an independent individual soul-agent which makes our consciousness its workshop.

To imagine that an object can be abstracted from its qualities, not only logically but in reality, that there is some unknown quantity that is in

¹ The passages quoted here as well as one in the next paragraph are taken from *Aṇvāghosa's Buddhacarita*

possession of such and such characteristic marks (*lakṣana*) whereby it makes itself perceivable by our senses, says Buddhism, is wrong and unwarranted by reason. Fire cannot be conceived apart from its form and heat, waves cannot be conceived apart from the water and its commotion, the wheel cannot exist outside of its rim, spokes, axle, etc. All things, thus, are made of *hetus* and *pratyayas*, of causes and conditions, of qualities and attributes, and it is impossible for our pudgala or ātman or ego or soul to be any exception to this universal condition of things.

Let me in this connection state an interesting incident in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Hui K'e, the second patriarch of the Dhyāna sect in China, was troubled with this ego-problem before his conversion. He was at first a faithful Confucian, but Confucianism did not satisfy all his spiritual wants. His soul was wavering between agnosticism and scepticism, and consequently he felt an unspeakable anguish in his inmost heart. When he learned of the arrival of Bodhidharma in his country, he hastened to his monastery and implored him to give him some spiritual advice. But Bodhidharma did not utter a word, being seemingly absorbed in his deep meditation. Hui K'e, however, was determined to obtain from him some religious instructions at all hazards. So it is reported that he was standing at the same spot seven days and nights, when he at last cut off his left arm with the sword he was carrying (being

a military officer) and placed it before Dharma, saying "This arm is a token of my sincere desire to be instructed in the Holy Doctrine. My soul is troubled and annoyed, pray let your grace show me the way to pacify it." Dharma quietly arose from his meditation and said "Where is your soul? Bring it here and I will have it pacified." Hui-K'e replied "I have been searching for it all these years, but I have never succeeded in laying a hand on it." Dharma then exclaimed "There, I have your soul pacified!" At this, it is said, a flash of spiritual enlightenment went across the mind of Hui K'e, and his "soul" was pacified once for all.

The Skandhas

When the five skandhas are combined according to their previous karma and present a temporal existence in the form of a sentient being, vulgar minds imagine that they have here an individual entity sustained by an immortal ego substratum. In fact, the material body (*rûpakaya*) alone is not what makes the ego-soul, nor the sensation (*vedanâ*), nor the deeds (*sanskâra*), nor the consciousness (*vyânâna*), nor the conception (*samjñâ*), but only when they are all combined in a certain form they make a sentient being. Yet this combination is not the work of a certain independent entity, which, according to its own will, combines the five skandhas in one form and then hides itself in it. The combination of the constituent

elements, Buddhism declares, is achieved by themselves after their karma. When a certain number of atoms of hydrogen and of oxygen are brought together, they attract each other on their own accord or owing to their own karma, and the result is water. The ego of water, so to speak, did not will to bring the two elements and make itself out of them. Even so is it with the existence of a sentient being, and there is no need of hypostasising a fabulous ego-monster behind the combination of the five skandhas.

Skandha (*khanda* in Pāli) literally means "aggregate" or "agglomeration", and, according to the Chinese exegetists, it is called so, because our personal existence is an aggregate of the five constituent elements of being, because it comes to take a definite individual form when the skandhas are brought together according to their previous karma. The first of the five aggregates is matter (*rūpa*), whose essential quality is thought to consist in resistance. The material part of our existence in the five sense organs called *indryas* eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body. The second skandha is called sensation or sense-impression (*vedana*), which results from the contact of the six *vijnānas* (senses) with the *visaya* (external world). The third is called *samjñā* which corresponds to our conception. It is the psychic power by which we are enabled to form the abstract images of particular objects. The fourth is *sanskāra* which may be rendered action or deed. Our intelligent consciousness,,

responding to impressions received which are either agreeable or disagreeable or indifferent, acts accordingly; and these acts bear fruit in the coming generations.

Sanskâra, the fourth constituent of being, comprises two categories, mental (*caitta*) and non mental (*cittavi-prayukta*). And the mental is subdivided into six fundamental (*mahâbhûmi*), good (*kuṣala*), tormenting (*kleṣa*), evil (*akuṣala*), tormenting minor (*upakleṣa*), and indefinite (*aniyata*) It may be interesting to enumerate what all these sankâras are, as they shed light on the practical ethics of Buddhism

There are ten fundamental sankâras belonging to the category of mental or psychic activities 1 cetanâ (mentation), 2 sparṣa (contact), 3 chanda (desire), 4 matī (understanding), 5 smṛti (recollection), 6 manaskara (concentration), 7 adhimokṣa (unfettered intelligence), 8 samâdhi (meditation) The ten good sankâras are 1 śraddhâ (faith), 2 vīrya (energy), 3 upekṣa (complacency), 4 hri (modesty), 5 apatrapâ (shame), 6 alobha (non covetousness), 7. adveśa (freedom from hatred), 8 ahimsa (gentleness of heart) 9 praśraddbhī (mental repose), 10 apramâda (attentiveness)

The six tormenting sankâras are as follows 1 moha (folly), 2 pramâda (wantonness), 3 kâusīdya (indolence), 4 aśraddhya (scepticism), 5 styāna (slothfulness), 6 âuddhatpa (unsteadiness)

The two minor evil sankâras are 1 ahrikatâ, state of not being modest, or arrogance, or self-

assertiveness, and 2 anapatrapa, being lost to shame, or to be without conscience.

The ten minor tormenting *sanskâras* are 1 *krodha* (anger), 2 *mraksa* (secretiveness), 3 *mâtsarya* (niggardliness), 4 *irsyâ* (envy), 5 *pradâça* (uneasiness), 6 *viñimsâ* (noxiousness), 7. *upanâha* (malignity), 8 *mâyâ* (trickiness), 9 *çâthya* (dishonesty), 10 *mada* (arrogance)

The eight indefinite *sanskâras* are 1. *kaukrtya* (repentance), 2 *muddha* (sleep), 3 *vitarka* (inquiry), 4 *vicâra* (investigation), 5 *râga* (excitement), 6 *pratigha* (wrath) 7 *mâna* (self reliance), 8 *vicikitsâ* (doubting)

The second grand category of *sanskâra* which is not included under "mental" or "psychic," comprises fourteen items as follows 1. *prâpti* (attainment), 2 *aprâpti* (non-attainment), 3 *sabhâgatâ* (grouping), 4 *asanjñika* (unconsciousness), 5 *asanjñisamâpatti* (unconscious absorption in religious meditation), 6 *nirodhasamâpatti* (annihilation trance of a heretic), 7 *jivita* (vitality), 8 *jâti* (birth), 9 *sthiti* (existing), 10 *jara* (decadence), 11 *anityatâ* (transitoriness), 12 *nâmakâya* (name), 13 *padakâya* (phrase), 14. *vyanjanakâya* (sentence)

Now, to return to the main problem The fifth *skandha* is called *vijnâna* commonly rendered consciousness, which, however, is not quite correct. The *vijnâna* is intelligence or mentality, it is the psychic power of discrimination, and in many cases it can be translated by sense There are, according to Hinayânists, six *vijnânas* or senses visual auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual, and cogitative, according

to Mahāyānaism there are eight vijñānas the manovijñāna and the ālayavijñāna, being added to the above six. This psychological phase of Mahāyāna philosophy is principally worked out by the Yogicītra school, whose leading thinkers are Asanga and Vasubandhu.

King Milinda and Nāgasena

Buddhist literature, Northern as well as Southern, abounds with expositions of the doctrine of non ego, as it is one of the most important foundation stones on which the magnificent temple of Buddhism is built. The dialogue¹ between King Milinda and Nāgasena, among many others, is very interesting for various reasons and full of suggestive thoughts, and we have the following discussion of theirs concerning the problem of ego abstracted from the Dialogue.

At their first meeting the King asks Nāgasena, "How is your Reverence known and what is your name?"

To this the monk philosopher replies "I am known as Nāgasena, and it is by that name that my brethren in the faith address me. But although parents give such a name as Nāgasena or Sūrasena, Virasena, or Sihasena, yet this Nāgasena and so on—is only a generally understood term, a designation in common use. For there is no permanent self involved in the matter."

Being greatly surprised by this answer, the King

¹ *The Questions of King Milinda Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV

volleys upon Nāgasena a series of questions as follows:

"If there be no permanent self involved in the matter, who is it, pray, who gives to you members of the Order your robes and food and lodging and necessities for the sick? Who is it who enjoys such things when given? Who is it who lives a life of righteousness? Who is it who devotes himself to meditation? Who is it who attains to the goal of the Excellent Way, to the Nirvāna of Arhatship? And who is it who destroys living creatures? who is it who takes what is not his own? who is it who lives an evil life of worldly lusts, who speaks lies, who drinks strong drink, who in a word commits any one of the five sins which work out their bitter fruit even in this life? If that be so, there is neither merit nor demerit, there is neither doer nor cause of good or evil deeds, there is neither fruit nor result of good or evil karma. If we are to think that were a man to kill you there would be no murder,¹ then it follows that there are no real masters or teachers in your Order, that your ordinations are void. You tell me that your brethren in the Order are in the habit of addressing you as Nāgasena. Now, what is that Nāgasena? Do you mean to say that the hair is Nāgasena?

This last query being denied by the Buddhist sage, the King asks "Or is it the nails, the skin, the flesh, the nerves, the bones, the marrow, the kidneys,

¹ This reminds us of the passage quoted elsewhere from the *Āṭika Upariśad*, cf. the footnote to it.

the heart, the liver, the abdomen, the spleen, the lungs, the larger intestines, the smaller intestines, the faeces, the bile, the phlegm, the pus, the blood, the sweat, the fat, the tears, the serum, the saliva, the mucus, the oil that lubricates the joints, the urine, or the brain or any or all of these, that is Nāgasena?

"Is it the material form that is Nāgasena, or the sensations, or the ideas, or the confections (deeds), or the consciousness, that is Nāgasena?"

To all these questions, the King, having received a uniform denial, exclaims in excitement "Then, thus, ask as I may, I can discover no Nāgasena Nāgasena is a mere empty sound Who then is the Nāgasena that we see before us?"¹ It is a falsehood that your Reverence has spoken an untruth?

Nāgasena does not give any direct answer but quietly proposes some counter questions to the King Ascertaining that he came in a carriage to the Buddhist philosopher, he asks "Is it the wheel or the framework, or the ropes, or the spokes of the wheels, or the goad, that are the chariot?"

To this, the king says, No and continues "it is on account of its having all these things that it

¹ As cited elsewhere Bodhi Dharma of the Dhyana sect, when questioned in a similar way replied "I do not know" Walt Whitman echoes the same sentiment in the following lines

A child said what is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands

How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is,
 any more than he

comes under the generally understood term, the designation in common use, of 'chariot '

"Very good," says Nāgasena, "Your Majesty has rightly grasped the meaning of 'chariot ' And just even so it is on account of all these things you questioned me about the thirty-two kinds of organic matter in a human body, and the five skandhas (constituent elements of being) that I come under the generally-understood term, the designation in common use, of 'Nāgasena '"

Then, the sage quotes in way of confirmation a passage from the *Samyutta Nikāya* "Just as it is by the condition precedent of the co existence of its various parts that the word 'chariot ' is used, just so it is that when the skandhas are there we talk of a 'being '



To further illustrate the theory of non-ātman from earlier Buddhist literature, let me quote the following from the *Jātaka Tales* (No 244)

The Bodhisattva said to a pilgrim "Will you have a drink of Ganges-water fragrant with the scent of the forest?

The pilgrim tried to catch him in his words "What is the Ganges? Is the sand the Ganges? Is the water the Ganges? Is the hither bank the Ganges? Is the further bank the Ganges?

But the Bodhisattva retorted, "If you except the

water, the sand, the hither bank, and the further bank, where can you find any Ganges?'

Following this argument we might say, "Where is the ego-soul, except imagination, volition, intellection, desire, aspiration, etc.?"

Ananda's Attempts to Locate the Soul

In the *Surangama Sutra*¹, Buddha exposes the absurdity of the hypothesis of an individual concrete soul-substance by subverting Ānanda's seven successive attempts to determine its whereabouts. Most people who firmly believe in personal immortality, will see how vague and chimerical and logically untenable is their notion of the soul, when it is critically examined as in the following case. Ānanda's conception of the soul is somewhat puerile, but I doubt whether even in our enlightened age the belief

¹ There seem to be two Chinese translations of this Sūtra, one by Kumārajīva and the other by Paramārtha but apparently they are different texts bearing the same title. Besides these two, there is another text entirely in Chinese translation. Owing to insufficiency of material at my disposal here, I cannot say anything definite about the identity or diversity of these documents. The following discussion that is reported to have taken place between the Buddha and Ananda is an abstract prepared from the first and the second fasciculi of Paramārtha's (?) translation. Beal gives in his *Catalogue of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese* (pp 286-369) an English translation of the first four fasc of the *Surangama*. Though this translation is not quite satisfactory in many points the reader may find there a detailed account of the discussion which is here only partially and roughly recapitulated.

entertained by the multitude is any better than his

When questioned by the Buddha as to the locality of the soul, Ānanda asserts that it resides within the body Thereupon, the Buddha says "If your intelligent soul resides within your corporeal body, how is it that it does not see your inside first? To illustrate, what we see first in this lecture hall is the interior and it is only when the windows are thrown open that we are able to see the outside garden and woods. It is impossible for us who are sitting in the hall to see the outside only and not to see the inside. Reasoning in a similar way, why does not the soul that is considered to be within the body see the internal organs first such as the stomach, heart, veins etc? If however it does not see the inside, surely it cannot be said to reside within the body "

Ānanda now proposes to solve the problem by locating the soul outside the body. He says that the soul is like a candle light placed without this hall. Where the light shines everything is visible, but within the room there are no candles burning, and therefore here prevails nothing but darkness. This explains the incapacity of the soul to see the inside of the body. But the Buddha argues that "it is impossible for the soul to be outside. If so, what the soul feels may not be felt by the body, and what the body feels may not be felt by the soul, as there is no relationship between the two. The fact, however, is that when you, Ānanda, see my hand thus stretched, you are conscious that you have the perception of

it As far as there is a correspondence between the soul and the body, the soul cannot be said to be residing outside the body

The third hypothesis assumed by Ananda is that the soul hides itself just behind the sense organs Suppose a man put a pair of lenses over his eyes Cannot he see the outside world through them? The reason why it cannot see the inside is that it resides within the sense organs

But says the Buddha 'When we have a lens over an eye, we perceive this lens as well as the outside world If the soul is hidden behind the sense organ why does it not see the sense organ itself? As it does not in fact, it cannot be residing in the place you mention '

Ânanda proposes another theory Within we have the stomach liver, heart, etc without, we have so many orifices Where the internal organs are there is darkness but where we have openings there is light Close the eyes and the soul sees the darkness inside Open the eyes and it sees the brightness outside What do you say to this theory?

The Buddha says If you take the darkness you see when the eyes are closed for your inside do you consider this darkness as something confronting your soul or not? In the first case wherever there prevails a darkness that must be thought to be your interior organs In the latter case seeing is impossible, for seeing presupposes the existence of subject and object Besides this there is another difficulty Grant-

ing your supposition that the eye could turn itself inward or outward and see the darkness of the interior or the brightness of the external world, it could also see your own face when the eye is opened. If it could not do so, it must be said to be incapable of turning the sight inward."

The fifth assumption as made by Ānanda is that the soul is the essence of understanding or intelligence, which is not within, nor without, nor in the middle, but which comes into actual existence as soon as it confronts the objective world, for it is taught by the Buddha that the world exists on account of the mind and the mind on account of the world.

To this the Buddha replies: "According to your argument, the soul must be said to exist before it comes in contact with the world, otherwise, the contact cannot have any sense. The soul, then, exists as an individual presence, not after nor at the time of a contact with the external world, but assuredly before the contact. Granting this, we come back again to the old difficulties. Does the soul come out of your inside, or does it come in from the outside? In case of the first alternative, the soul must be able to see its own face.

Ānanda interrupts: "Seeing is done by the eyes, and the soul has nothing to do with it."

The Buddha objects: "If so, a dead man has eyes just as perfect as a living man.¹ He must be able

¹ Cf. the following which is extracted from the *Questions of King Milinda* (Sacred Books of the East, vol. XXXV,

to see things, but if he sees at all, he cannot be dead. Well, if your intelligent soul has a concrete existence, should it be thought simple or compound? Should it be thought of as filling the body or being present only in a particular spot? If it is a simple unit, when one of your limbs is touched, all the four will at once be conscious of the touch, which really means no touch. If the soul is a compound body, how can it distinguish itself from another soul? If it is filling the body all over, there will be no localisation of sensation, as must be the case according to the first supposition of a simple soul-unit. Finally, if it occupies only a particular part of the body, you may experience certain feelings on that spot only, and all the other parts will remain perfectly anesthetic. All these hypotheses are against the actual facts of our experience and cannot be logically maintained.

For the sixth time, Ânanda ventures to untie the Gordian knot of the soul-problem. "As the soul cannot be located neither within nor without, it must be somewhere in the middle. But the Buddha again refutes this, saying 'This middle is extremely indefinite. Should it be located as a point in space or somewhere on the body? If it is on the surface of the body,

133) 'If there be a soul [distinct from the body] which does all this, then if the door of the eye were thrown down [if the eye were plucked out] could it stretch out its head, as it were through the larger aperture and [with greater range] see forms much more clearly than before? Could one hear sounds better if the ears were cut off, or taste better if the tongue were pulled out, or feel touch better if the body were destroyed?

it is not the middle, if it is in the body, it is then within. If it is said to occupy a point in space, how should that point be indicated? Without an indication, a point is no point, and if an indication is needed, it can be fixed anywhere arbitrarily, and then there will be no end of confusion.

Ānanda interposes and says that he does not mean this kind of "middle." The eye and the color conditioning each other, there comes to exist visual perception. The eye has the faculty to discriminate, and the color world has no sensibility, but the perception takes place in their "middle," that is, in their interaction, and then it is said that there exists a soul.

Says the Buddha: "If the soul, as you say, exists in the relation between the sense organs (*indrya*) and their respective sense-objects (*viśaya*), should we consider the soul as uniting and partaking the natures of these two incongruous things, *viśaya* and *indrya*? If the soul partakes something of each, it has no characteristics of its own. If it unites the two natures, the distinction between subject and object exists no more. 'In the middle' is an empty word, that is to say, to conceive the soul as the relation between the *indryas* and the *viśayas* is to make it an airy nothing."

The seventh and final hypothesis offered by Ānanda is that the soul is the state of non attachment, and that, therefore, it has no particular locality in which it abides. But this is also mercilessly attacked by the Buddha who declares: "Attachment presupposes the existence of beings to which a mind may be attached."

Now, should we consider these things (*dharmas*) such as the world, space, land, water, birds, beasts, etc as existing or not existing? If the external world does not exist, we cannot speak about non-attachment, as there is nothing to attach from the first. If the external world really is, how can we manage not to come in contact with it? When we say that things are devoid of all characteristic marks, it amounts to the declaration that they are non-existent. But they are not non-existent, they must have certain characteristics that distinguish themselves. Now, the external world has certainly some marks (*lakṣaṇa*) and it must by all means be considered as existing. There then is no room for your theory of non attachment.

At this, Ānanda surrenders and the Buddha discloses his theory of Dharmakaya, which we shall expound at some length in the chapter specially devoted to it.

* * *

By way of a summary of the above, let me remark that the Buddhists do not deny the existence of the so called empirical ego in contradistinction to the noumenal ego, which latter can be considered to correspond to the Buddhist ātman. Vasubandhu in his treatise on the Yogācāra's idealistic philosophy declares that the existence of ātman and dharma is only hypothetical, provisional, apparent, and not in any sense real and ultimate. To express this in modern terms, the soul and the world, or subject and object, have only relative existence, and no absolute reality can

be ascribed to them Psychologically speaking, every one of us has an ego or soul which means the unity of consciousness, and physically, this world of phenomena is real either as a manifestation of one energy or as a composite of atoms or electrons, as is considered by physicists

To confine ourselves to the psychological question, what Buddhism most emphatically insists on is the non existence of a concrete, individual, irreducible soul substance, whose immortality is so much coveted by most unenlightened people Individuation is only relative and not absolute Buddhism knows how far the principle could safely and consistently be carried out, and its followers will not forget where to stop and destroy the wall, almost adamant to some religionists, of individualism Absolute individualism, as the Buddhists understand it, incapacitates us to follow the natural flow of sympathy, to bathe in the eternal sunshine of divinity which not only surrounds but penetrates us, to escape the curse of individual immortality which is strangely so much sought after by some people, to trace this mundane life to its fountainhead of which it drinks so freely, yet quite unknowingly, to rise rejuvenated from the consuming fire of Kâla (Chronos) To think that there is a mysterious something behind the empirical ego and that this something comes out triumphantly after the fashion of the immortal phoenix from the funeral pyre of corporeality, is not Buddhistâ

What I would remark here in connection with this,

problem of the soul, is its relation to that of *Ālaya vijnāna*, of which it is said that the Buddha was very reluctant to talk, on account of its being easily confounded with the notion of the ego. The *Ālaya*, as was explained, is a sort of universal soul from which our individual empirical souls are considered to have evolved. The *Manas* which is the first offspring of the *Ālaya* is endowed with the faculty of discrimination, and from the wrongful use of this faculty there arises in the *Manas* the conception of the *Ālaya* as the ego, — the real concrete soul substratum.

The *Alaya*, however, is not a particular phenomenon, for it is a state of Suchness in its evolutionary disposition and has nothing in it yet to suggest its concrete individuality. When the *Manas* finds out its error and lifts the veil of Ignorance from the body of the *Ālaya*, it soon becomes convinced of the ultimate nature of the soul, so called For the soul is not individual, but supra individual.

Ātman and the "Old Man"

When the Buddhists exclaim "Put away your egoism, for the ego is an empty notion a mere word without reality, some of our Christian readers may think that if there is no ego, what will become of our personality or individuality? Though this point will become clearer as we proceed, let us remark here that what Buddhism understands by ego or *ātman* may be considered to correspond in many respects to the Christian notion of "flesh or the

"old man," which is the source of all our sinful acts. Says Paul "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life which I live now in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal ii, 20). When this passage is interpreted by the Buddhists, the "I" that was annihilated through crucifixion, is our false notion of an ego soul (*âtman*), and the "I" that is living through the grace of God is the Bodhi, a reflex in us of the Dharmakâya.

When Christians put the spirit and the flesh in contrast and advise us to "walk in the spirit and not to fulfil the lust of the flesh," it must be said that they understand by the flesh our concrete, material existence whose characteristic is predominantly individual, and by the spirit, that which transcends particularity and egoism, for "love, joy, peace, long suffering, faith, meekness, temperance," and suchlike virtues are possible only when our egocentric, *âtman*-made desires are utterly abnegated. Buddhism is more intellectual than Christianity or Judaism and prefers philosophical terms which are better understood than popular language which leads often to confusion. Compared with the Buddhists' conception of *âtman*, the "flesh" lacks in perspicuity and exactitude, not to speak of its dualistic tendency which is extremely offensive to the Buddhists.

The Vedantic Conception

Though the doctrine of non *âtman* is pre-eminently Buddhistic, other Hindu philosophers did not neglect to acknowledge its importance in our religious life. Having grown in the same soil under similar circumstances, the following passage which is taken from the *Yogavâsistha* (which is supposed to be a Vedantic work, Upaçama P, ch LII, 31, 44) sounds almost like Buddhistic

"I am absolute, I am the light of intelligence, I am free from the defilement of egoism. O thou that art unreal! I am not bound by thee, the seed of egoism."¹

The author then argues: Where shall we consider the ego soul, so called, to be residing in this body of flesh and bones? and what does it look like? We move our limbs, but the movement is due to the vital airs (*vata*). We think, but consciousness is a manifestation of the great mind (*mahâtitta*). We cease to exist, but extinction belongs to the body (*kaya*). Now, take apart what we imagine to constitute our personal existence. The flesh is one thing, the blood is another, and so on with mentation (*bodha*) and vitality (*spanda*). The ear hears, the tongue tastes, the eye sees, the mind

¹ Nirvikalpo smi ciddipō nirahankaravasanah;

Tāya ahankarabijena na sambaddho smi asanmaya (31)

thinks, but what and where is that which we call 'ego' ?

Then comes the conclusion "In reality, there is no such thing as the ego-soul, nor is there any mine and thine, nor imagination. All this is nothing but the manifestation of the universal soul which is the light of pure intelligence" ¹

Nāgārjuna on the Soul

In conclusion, let me quote some passage bearing on the subject from Nāgārjuna's *Discourse on the Middle Path* (chapter 9) ² "Some say that there are seeing, hearing, feeling, etc., because there is something which exists even prior to those [manifestations] For how could seeing, etc. come from that which does not exist? Therefore, it must be admitted that that being [i.e. soul] existed prior to those [manifestations]

"But [this hypothesis of the prior (*pûrva*) or independent existence of the soul is wrong, because] how could that being be known if it existed prior to seeing, feeling, etc.? If that being could exist without seeing, etc., the latter too could surely exist without that being. But how could a thing which could not be known by any sign exist before it is known? How could *this* exist without *that*, and how could

¹ Yathā bhūtatayā na ahammano na tvam na vāsanā

Atmā çuddhacīdabhasah kevalo yam vijrbhate (44)

² The following is a somewhat free translation of the original Chinese of Kumārajīva, which pretty closely agrees with the Sanskrit text published by the Buddhist Text Society of India

that exist without *this*? [Are not all things relative and conditioning one another?]

"If that being called soul could not exist prior to all manifestations such as seeing, etc., how could it exist prior to each of them taken individually?

"If it is the same soul that sees, hears, feels, etc., it must be assumed that the soul exists prior to each of these manifestations. This, however, is not warranted by facts [Because in that case one must be able to hear with the eyes, see with the ears, as one soul is considered to direct all these diverse faculties at its will]

"If, on the other hand, the hearer is one, and the seer is another, the feeler must be still another. Then, there will be hearing, seeing, etc. simultaneously, — which leads to the assumption of a plurality of souls.¹ [This too is against experience]

"Further, the soul does not exist in the element (*bhûta*) on which seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. depend [To use modern expression, the soul does not exist in the nerves which respond to the external stimuli]

"If seeing, hearing, feeling, etc. have no soul that exists prior to them, they too have no existence as such. For how could *that* exist without *this*, and *this* without *that*? Subject and object are mutually conditioned. The soul as it is has no independent, individual reality whatever. Therefore, the hypothesis that contends for the existence of an ego-soul prior

¹ The Sanskrit text does not give this passage.

to simultaneous with, or posterior to, seeing, etc., is to be abandoned as fruitless, for the ego soul existeth not.'

Non-atman ness of Things

The word 'âtman' is used by the Buddhists not only psychologically in the sense of soul, self, or ego, but also ontologically in the sense of substance or thing in itself or thinginess, and its existence in this capacity is also strongly denied by them. For the same reason that the existence of an individual ego soul is untenable, they reject the hypothesis of the permanent existence of an individual object as such. As there is no transcendent agent in our soul life, so there is no real, eternal existence of individuals as individuals, but a system of different attributes, which, when the force of karma is exhausted, ceases to subsist. Individual existences cannot be real by their inherent nature, but they are illusory, and will never remain permanent as such, for they are constantly becoming, and have no selfhood though they may so appear to our particularising senses on account of our subjective ignorance. They are in reality cûnya and anâtman, they are empty and void of Âtman.

Sabbhava

The term 'sabbhâta (self-essence or noumenon) is sometimes used by the Mahâyânists in place of âtman and they would say that all dharmas have no self.

essence, sarvam dharmam niḥsvabhāvam, which is to say, that all things in their phenomenal aspect are devoid of individual selves, that it is only due to our ignorance that we believe in the thinginess of things, whereas there is no such thing as svabhāva or ātman or noumenon which resides in them Svabhāva and ātman are thus habitually used by Buddhists as quite synonymous

What do they exactly understand by "svabhāva" whose existence is denied in a particular object as perceived by our senses? This has never been explicitly defined by the Mahāyānists, but they seem to understand by svabhāva something concrete, individual, yet independent, unconditional, and not subject to the law of causation (pratyayasamutpāda). It, therefore, stands in opposition to çūnyatā, emptiness, as well as to conditionality. Inasmuch as all beings are transient and empty in their inherent being, they cannot logically be said to be in possession of self-essence which defies the law of causation. All things are mutually conditioning and limiting, and apart from their relativity they are non-existent and cannot be known by us. Therefore, says Nāgārjuna, "If substance be different from attribute, it is then beyond comprehension."¹ For "a jag is not to be known independent of matter et cetera, and matter in turn is not to be known independent of ether et cetera."²

¹ Lakṣyāḥ lakṣaṇam anyac cet syāt tal lakṣyam alakṣaṇam

² Rūpādi vyatirekena yathā kumbho na vidyate,
Vāhyādi vyatirekena tathā rūpam na vidyate.

As there is no subject without object, so there is no substance without attribute, for one is the condition for the other. Does self-essence then exist in causation? No, "whatever is subject to conditionality, is by its very nature tranquil and empty" (*Pratitya yad yad bhavati, tat tac śāntam svabhāvatam*). Whatever owes its existence to a combination of causes and conditions is without self-essence, and therefore it is tranquil (*śānta*), it is empty, it is unreal (*asat*), and the ultimate nature of this universal emptiness is not within the sphere of intellectual demonstrability, for the human understanding is not capable of transcending its inherent limitations.

Says Pingalaka, a commentator of Nāgārjuna "The cloth exists on account of the thread, the matting is possible on account of the rattan. If the thread had its own fixed, unchangeable self essence, it could not be made out of the flax. If the cloth had its own fixed, unchangeable self essence, it could not be made from the thread. But as in point of fact the cloth comes from the thread and the thread from the flax, it must be said that the thread as well as the cloth had no fixed, unchangeable self-essence. It is just like the relation that obtains between the burning and the burned. They are brought together under certain conditions, and thus there takes place a phenomenon called burning. The burning and the burned, each has no reality of its own. For when one is absent the other is put out of existence. It is so with all things in this world, they are all empty."

without self, without absolute existence, they are like the will-'o-the-wisp " 1

The Real Significance of Emptiness.

From these statements it will be apparent that the emptiness of things (*śūnyatā*) does not mean nothingness, as is sometimes interpreted by some critics, but it simply means conditionality or transitoriness of all phenomenal existences, it is a synonym for anīyata or pratīya. Therefore, emptiness, according to the Buddhists, signifies, negatively, the absence of particularity, the non-existence of individuals as such, and positively, the ever changing state of the phenomenal world, a constant flux of becoming, an eternal series of causes and effects. It must never be understood in the sense of annihilation or absolute nothingness, for nihilism is as much condemned by Buddhism as naïve realism. "The Buddha proclaimed emptiness as a remedy for all doctrinal controversies, but those who in turn cling to emptiness are beyond treatment." A medicine is indispensable as long as there is a disease to heal, but it turns poisonous when applied after the restoration of perfect health. To make this point completely clear, let me quote the following from Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamika Śāstra* (Chap XXIV) "[Some one may object to the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness, declaring] If all is void (*śūnya*) and

¹ Abstracted from Pingalaka's *Commentary on the Mādhyamika Śāstra*, Chapter VII. The Chinese translation is by Kumārajīva.

there is neither creation nor destruction then it must be concluded that even the Fourfold Noble Truth does not exist. If the Fourfold Noble Truth does not exist, the recognition of Suffering, the stoppage of Accumulation, the attainment of Cessation, and the advancement of Discipline, — all must be said to be unrealisable. If they are altogether unrealisable, there cannot be any of the four states of saintliness, and without these states there cannot be anybody who will aspire for them. If there are no wise men, the Sangha is then impossible. Further, as there is no Fourfold Noble Truth, there is no Good Law (*saddharma*), and as there is neither Good Law nor Sangha, the existence of Buddha himself must be an impossibility. Those who talk of emptiness, therefore, must be said to negate the Triple Treasure (*triratna*) altogether. Emptiness not only destroys the law of causation and the general principle of retribution (*phalasadbhāvam*), but utterly annihilates the possibility of a phenomenal world

[To this it is to be remarked that]

“Only he is annoyed over such scepticism who understands not the true significance and interpretation of emptiness (*śūnyata*)

“The Buddha's teaching rests on the discrimination of two kinds of truth (*satya*) absolute and relative. Those who do not have any adequate knowledge of them are unable to grasp the deep and subtle meaning of Buddhism. [The essence of being, *dharma* is beyond verbal definition or intellectual compre-

hension, for there is neither birth nor death in it, and it is even like unto Nirvâna. The nature of Suchness, tattva, is fundamentally free from conditionality, it is tranquil, it distances all phenomenal frivolities, it discriminates not, nor is it particularised].*

"But if not for relative truth, absolute truth is unattainable, and when absolute truth is not attained, Nirvâna is not to be gained.

*The dull-headed who do not perceive the truth rightfully go to self destruction, for they are like an awkward magician whose trick entangles himself, or like an unskilled snake-catcher who gets himself hurt. The World-honored One knew well the abstruseness of the Doctrine which is beyond the mental capacity of the multitudes and was inclined not to disclose it before them.

"The objection that Buddhism onesidedly adheres to emptiness and thereby exposes itself to grave errors, entirely misses the mark, for there are no errors in emptiness. Why? Because it is on account of emptiness that all things are at all possible, and without emptiness all things will come to naught. Those who deny emptiness and find fault with it, are like a horseman who forgets that he is on horseback.

"If they think that things exist because of their self-essence (*svabhâva*), [and not because of their emptiness,] they thereby make things come out of causelessness (*ahetupratyaya*), they destroy those

* The passage in parentheses is taken from Chandrakīrti's *Commentary on Nāgārjuna*, pp. 180—181.

relations that exist between the acting and the act and the acted, and they also destroy the conditions that make up the law of birth and death

"All is declared empty because there is nothing that is not a product of universal causation (*pratityaya samutpada*) This law of causation, however, is merely provisional, though herein lies the middle path

"As thus there is not an object (*dharma*) which is not conditioned (*pratitya*), so there is nothing that is not empty

"If all is not empty, then there is no death nor birth and withal disappears the Fourfold Noble Truth

"How could there be Suffering if not for the law of causation? Impermanence is suffering But with self essence there will be no impermanence [So long as impermanence is the condition of life, self essence which is a causeless existence, is out of question] Suppose Suffering is self existent, then it could not come from Accumulation, which in turn becomes impossible when emptiness is not admitted Again, when Suffering is self-existent, then there could be no Cessation, for with the hypothesis of self essence Cessation becomes a meaningless term Again when Suffering is self existent, then there will be no Path But as we can actually walk on the Path, the hypothesis of self essence is to be abandoned.

'If there is neither Suffering nor Cessation it must be said that the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering is also non existent

If there is really self essence, Suffering could not

be recognised now, as it had not been recognised, for self essence as such must remain forever the same [That is to say, enlightened minds, through the teaching of Buddha, now recognise the existence of Suffering, though they did not recognise it when they were still uninitiated. If things were all in a fixed, self determining state on account of their self essence, it would be impossible for those enlightened men to discover what they had never observed before. The recognition of the Fourfold Noble Truth is only possible when this phenomenal world is in a state of constant becoming, that is, when it is empty as it really is.]

"As it is with the recognition of Suffering, so it is with the stoppage of Accumulation, the attainment of Cessation, the realisation of Path as well as with the four states of saintliness

"If, on account of self essence, the four states of saintliness were unattainable before, how could they be realised now, still upholding the hypothesis of self-essence? [But we can attain to saintliness as a matter of fact, for there are many holy men who through their spiritual discipline have emerged from their former life of ignorance and darkness. If everything had its own self essence which makes it impossible to transform from one state to another, how could a person desire to ascend, if he ever so desire, higher and higher on the scale of existence?]

"If there were no four states of saintliness (*catvari phalani*)" then there would be no aspirants for it

And if there were no eight wise men (*puruṣaṣaṣṭika*), there could exist no Sangha

"Again, when there could not be the Fourfold Noble Truth, the Law would be impossible, and without the Sangha and the Law how could the Buddha exist? You might say 'A Buddha does not exist on account of wisdom (*Bodhi*), nor does wisdom exist on account of the Buddha' But if a man did not have Buddha-essence [that is, *Bodhi*] he could not hope to attain to Buddhahood, however strenuously he might exert himself in the ways of *Bodhisattva*

"Further, if all is not empty but has self-essence, [i. e. if all is in a fixed, unchangeable state of sameness] how could there be any doing? How could there be good and evil? If you maintain that there is an effect (*phala*) which does not come from a cause good or evil, [which is the practical conclusion of the hypothesis of self-essence], then it means that retribution is independent of our deed, good or evil [But is this justified by our experience?]

"If it must then be admitted that our deed good or evil becomes the cause of retribution, retribution must be said to come from our deed, good or evil, then how could we say there is no emptiness?

"When you negate the doctrine of emptiness, the law of universal causation, you negate the possibility of this phenomenal world. When the doctrine of emptiness is negated, there remains nothing that ought to be done, and a thing is called done which is not yet accomplished, and he is said to be a doer 'who has

not done anything whatever. If there were such a thing as self essence, the multitudinousness of things must be regarded as uncreated and imperishable and eternally existing which is tantamount to eternal nothingness.

"If there were no emptiness there would be no attainment of what has not yet been attained, nor would there be the annihilation of pain, nor the extinction of all the passions (*sarvakleṣa*)

"Therefore, it is taught by the Buddha that those who recognise the law of universal causation, recognise the Buddha as well as Suffering, Accumulation, Cessation, and the Path."

* * *

The Mahâyānistic doctrines thus formulated and transmitted down to the present days are: There is no such thing as the ego, mentation is produced by the co-ordination of various *vijnānas* or senses.

Individual existences have no selfhood or self-essence or reality, for they are but an aggregate of certain qualities sustained by efficient karma. The world of particulars is the work of Ignorance as declared by Buddha in his Formula of Dependence (Twelve *Nidānas*). When this veil of *Māya* is uplifted, the universal light of *Dharmakāya* shines in all its magnificence. Individual existences then as such lose their significance and become sublimated and ennobled in the oneness of *Dharmakāya*. Egoistic prejudices are forever vanquished, and the aim of our lives is no more the

gratification of selfish cravings, but the glorification of Dharma as it works its own way through the multitudinousness of things. The self does not stand any more in a state of isolation (which is an illusion). It is absorbed in the universal body of Dharma, it recognises itself in other selves animate as well as inanimate, and all things are in Nirvāna. When we reach this state of ideal enlightenment, we are said to have realised the Buddhist life.

CHAPTER VIII

KARMA.

Definition.

KARMA, or Sanskāra which is sometimes used as its synonym,—though the latter gives a slightly different shade of meaning,—comes from the Sanskrit root *kṛ*, “to do,” “to make,” “to perform,” “to effect,” “to produce,” etc. Both terms mean activity in its concrete as well as in its abstract sense, and form an antithesis to intelligence, contemplation, or ideation in general. When karma is used in its most abstract sense, it becomes an equivalent to “beginningless ignorance,” which is universally inherent in nature, and corresponds to the Will or blind activity of Schopenhauer, for ignorance as we have seen above is a negative manifestation of Suchness (*Bhūta-tathātā*) and marks the beginning or unfolding of a phenomenal world, whose existence is characterised by incessant activities actuated by the principle of karma. When Goethe says in *Faust*, “In Anfang war die That,” he uses the term “That” in the sense of karma as it is here understood.

When karma is used in its concrete sense, it is the

principle of activity in the world of particulars or nāmarūpas it becomes in the physical world the principle of conservation of energy, in the biological realm that of evolution and heredity etc., and in the moral world that of immortality of deeds. Sanskara, when used as an equivalent of karma, corresponds to this concrete signification of it, as it is the case in the Twelve Chains of Dependence (*Nidānas*, or *Paṭtyāyasamutpāda*)¹ Here it follows ignorance (*avidyā*) and precedes consciousness (*vyñāna*). Ignorance in this case means simply privation of enlightenment, and does not imply any sense of activity which is expressed in Sanskāra. It is only when it is coupled with the latter that it becomes the principle of activity, and creates as its first offspring consciousness or mentality. In fact, ignorance and blind activity are one, their logical difference being this: the former emphasises the epistemological phase and the latter the ethical, or, we might say, one is statical and the other dynamical. If we are to draw a comparison between the first four of the Twelve Nidānas and the several processes of evolution that takes place in the Tathāgata garbha as described above, we can take Ignorance and the principle of blind activity, san-

¹ The Twelve Nidānas are (1) Ignorance (*avidyā*) (2) action (*sanskāra*) (3) Consciousness (*vyñāna*) (4) Name and form (*nāmarūpa*) (5) Six Sense organs (*āyatana*) (6) Contact (*sparga*) (7) Sensation (*vedanā*) (8) Desire (*trishā*) (9) Attachment (*upādāna*) (10) Procreation (*bhava*) (11) birth (*jaṭi*) (12) Old Age, Death etc (*jarā maraṇa śoka* etc.)

skâra, in the Twelve Chains as corresponding to the All conserving Soul (*âlayavijnâna*), and the Vijnâna, consciousness of the Twelve Chains, to the Manovijnâna, and the Nâmârûpa to this visible world, *visaja*, in which the principle of karma works in its concrete form

As we have a special chapter devoted to "Ignorance as an equivalent of karma in its abstract sense, let us here treat of the Buddhist conception of karma in the realm of names and forms, i e of karma in its concrete sense But we shall restrict ourselves to the activity of karmic causation in the moral world, as we are not concerned with physics or biology

The Working of Karma

The Buddhist conception of karma briefly stated is this Any act, good or evil, once committed and conceived never vanishes like a bubble in water, but lives, potentially or actively as the case may be, in the world of minds and deeds This mysterious moral energy, so to speak, is embodied in and emanates from every act and thought for it does not matter whether it is actually performed or merely conceived in the mind When the time comes it is sure to germinate and grow with all its vitality Says Buddha

Karma even after the lapse of a hundred kalpas
Will not be lost nor destroyed
As soon as all the necessary conditions are ready,
Its fruit is sure to ripe¹

¹ From a Chinese Mahâyâna sutra.

Again,

"Whatever a man does the same he in himself will find
The good man good and evil he that evil has designed,
And so our deeds are all like seeds, and bring forth fruit
in kind ' ' "

A grain of wheat, it is said which was accidentally preserved in good condition in a tomb more than a thousand years old, did not lose its germinating energy, and, when planted with proper care, it actually started to sprout. So with karma, it is endowed with an enormous vitality, nay, it is even immortal. However remote the time of their commission might have been, the karma of our deeds never dies, it must work out its own destiny at whatever cost, if not overcome by some counteracting force. The law of karma is irrefragable.

The irrefragability of karma means that the law of causation is supreme in our moral sphere just as much as in the physical, that life consists in a concatenation of causes and effects regulated by the principle of karma, that nothing in the life of an individual or a nation or a race happens without due cause and sufficient reason, that is, without previous karma. The Buddhists, therefore, do not believe in any special act of grace or revelation in our religious realm and moral life. The idea of *deus ex machina* is banned in Buddhism. Whatever is suffered or enjoyed morally in our present life is due to the karma, accumulated

* The Pali Jataka no 111 Translation by W. H. Pouse

since the beginning of life on earth Nothing sown,
nothing reaped

Whatever has been done leaves an ineffable mark
in the individual's life and even in that of the universe,
and this mark will never be erased save by sheer
exhaustion of the karma or by the interruption of
an overwhelming counter karma In case the karma
of an act is not actualised during one's own life time
it will in that of one's successors, who may be phys-
ical or spiritual Not only "the evil that men do
lives after them" but also the good for it will not be
'interred with their bones, as vulgar minds imagine
We read in the *Samyukta Nikaya* III, 1 — 4

Assailed by death in life's last throes
At quitting of this human state
What is it one can call his own?
What with him take as he goes hence?
What is it follows after him
And like a shadow ne'er departs?

His good deeds and his wickedness
Whatever a mortal does while here
Tis this that he can call his own
This with him take as he goes hence
This is what follows after him
And like a shadow ne'er departs

Let all then noble deeds perform
A treasure store for future weal
For merit gained this life within
Will yield a blessing in the next

In accordance with this karmic preservation, Buddhists do not expect to have their sins expiated by other innocent people so long as their own hearts remain unsoftened as ever. But when the all embracing love of Buddhas for all sentient beings kindles even the smallest spark of repentance and enlightenment in the heart of a sinner, and when this ever vacillating light grows to its full magnitude under propitious conditions the sinner gets fully awakened from the evil karma of eons, and enters, free from all curses, into the eternity of Nirvana.

Karma and Social Injustice

The doctrine of karma is very frequently utilised by some Buddhists to explain a state of things which must be considered cases of social injustice.

There are some people who are born rich and noble and destined to enjoy all forms of earthly happiness and all the advantages of social life, though they have done nothing that justifies them in luxuriating in such a fashion any more than their poor neighbors. These people, however, are declared by some pseudo Buddhists to be merely harvesting the crops of good karma they had prepared in their former lives. On the other hand, the poor, needy, and low that are struggling to eke out a mere existence in spite of their moral rectitude and honest industry, are considered to be suffering the evil karma which had been accumulated during their previous lives. The law of moral retribution is never

suspended, as they reason, on account of the changes which may take place in a mortal being. An act, good or evil, once performed, will not be lost in the eternal succession and interaction of incidents, but will certainly find the sufferer of its due consequence, and it does not matter whether the actor has gone through the vicissitudes of birth and death. For the Buddhist conception of individual identity is not that of personal continuity, but of karmic conservation. Whatever deeds we may commit, they invariably bear their legitimate fruit and follow us even after death. Therefore, if the rich and noble neglect to do their duties or abandon themselves to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, then they are sure in their future births, if not in their present life to gather the crops they have thus unwittingly prepared for themselves. The poor, however hard their lot in this life, can claim their rightful rewards, if they do not get despaired of their present sufferings and give themselves up to temptations but dutifully continue to do things good and meritorious. Because as their present fate is the result of their former deeds, so will be their future fortune the fruit of their present deeds.

This view as held by some pseudo Buddhists gives us a wrong impression about the practical working of the principle of karma in this world of *nāmarūpas*, for it tries to explain by karmic theory the phenomena which lie outside of the sphere of its applicability. As I understand, what the theory of karma

proposes to explain is not cases of social injustice and economic inequality, but facts of moral causation

The overbearing attitude of the rich and the noble, the unnecessary sufferings of the poor, the over-production of criminals, and suchlike social phenomena arise from the imperfection of our present social organisation, which is based upon the doctrine of absolute private ownership. People are allowed to amass wealth unlimitedly for their own use and to bequeath it to the successors who do not deserve it in any way. And they do not pay regard to the injuries this system may incur upon the general welfare of the community to which they belong, and upon other members individually. The rich might have slaughtered economically and consequently politically and morally millions of their brethren before they could reach places of social eminence they now occupy and enjoy to its full extent. They might have sacrificed hundreds of thousands of victims on the altar of Mammon in order to carry out their vast scheme of self-aggrandisement. And, what is worse, the wealth thus accumulated by an individual is allowed by the law to be handed down to his descendants, who are in a sense the parasitic members of the community. They are privileged to live upon the sweat and blood of others, who know not where to lay their heads, and who are daily succumbing to the heavy burden, not of their free choice, but forced upon them by society.

Let us here closely see into the facts. There is one portion of society that does almost nothing toward

the promotion of the general welfare, and there is another portion that, besides carrying the burden not of its own, is heroically struggling for bare existence. These sad phenomena which, owing to the imperfection of social organisation, we daily witness about us,—should we attribute them to diversity of individual karma and make individuals responsible for what is really due to the faulty organisation of the community to which they belong? No the doctrine of karma certainly must not be understood to explain the cause of our social and economical imperfection.

The region where the law of karma is made to work supreme is our moral world, and cannot be made to extend also over our economic field. Poverty is not necessarily the consequence of evil deeds nor is plenitude that of good acts. Whether a person is affluent or needy is mostly determined by the principle of economy as far as our present social system is concerned. Morality and economy are two different realms of human activity. Honesty and moral rectitude do not necessarily guarantee well being. Dishonesty and the violation of the moral law, on the contrary, are very frequently utilised as handmaids of material prosperity. Do we not thus see many good conscientious people around us who are wretchedly poverty stricken? Shall we take them as suffering the curse of evil karma in their previous lives when we can understand the fact perfectly well as a case of social injustice? It is not necessary by any means, nay, it is even productive of evil to establish a rela

tion between the two things that in the nature of their being have no causal dependence Karma ought not to be made accountable for economic inequality

A virtuous man is contented with his cleanliness of conscience and purity of heart Obscure as is his present social position, and miserable as are his present pecuniary conditions, he has no mind to look backward and find the cause of his social insignificance there, nor is he anxious about his future earthly fortune which might be awaiting him when his karmaic energy appears in a new garment His heart is altogether free from such vanities and anxieties He is sufficient unto himself as he is here and now And, as to his altruistic aspect of his moral deeds, he is well conscious that their karma would spiritually benefit everybody that gets inspired by it, and also that it would largely contribute to the realisation of goodness on this earth Why, then, must we contrive such a poor theory of karma as is maintained by some, in order that they might give him a spiritual solace for his material misfortune?

Vulgar people are too eager to see everything and every act they perform working for the accumulation of earthly wealth and the promotion of material welfare They would want to turn even moral deeds which have no relation to the economic condition of life into the opportunities to attain things mundane They would desire to have the law of karmaic causation applied to a realm, where prevails an entirely different set of laws In point of fact, what proceeds from

meritorious deeds is spiritual bliss only, — contentment, tranquillity of mind, meekness of heart, and immovability of faith, — all the heavenly treasures which could not be corrupted by moth or rust. And what more can the karma of good deeds bring to us? And what more would a man of pious heart desire to gain from his being good? 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body more than raiment? Let us then do away with the worldly interpretation of karma, which is so contrary to the spirit of Buddhism.

As long as we live under the present state of things, it is impossible to escape the curse of social injustice and economic inequality. Some people must be born rich and noble and enjoying a superabundance of material wealth, while others must be groaning under the unbearable burden imposed upon them by cruel society. Unless we make a radical change in our present social organisation we cannot expect every one of us to enjoy equal opportunity and fair chance. Unless we have a certain form of socialism installed which is liberal and rational and systematic, there must be some who are economically more favored than others. But this state of affairs is a phenomenon of worldly institution and is doomed to die away sooner or later. The law of karma, on the contrary, is an eternal ordinance of the will of the Dharmakāya as manifested in this world of

particulars We must not confuse a transient accident of human society with an absolute decree issued from the world-authority

An Individualistic View of Karma

There is another popular misconception concerning the doctrine of karma, which seriously mars the true interpretation of Buddhism I mean by this an individualistic view of the doctrine This view asserts that deeds, good or evil, committed by a person determine only his own fate, no others being affected thereby in any possible way, and that the reason why we should refrain from doing wrong is for we, and not others, have to suffer its evil consequences This conception of karma which I call individualistic, presupposes the absolute reality of an individual soul and its continuance as such in a new corporeal existence which is made possible by its previous karma Because an individual soul is here understood as an independent unit, which stands in no relation to others, and which therefore neither does influence nor is influenced by them in any wise. All that is done by oneself is suffered by oneself only and no other people have anything to do with it, nor do they suffer a whit thereby

Buddhism, however, does not advocate this individualistic interpretation of karmic law, for it is not in accord with the theory of non-*âtman*, nor with that of *Dharmakâya*.

According to the orthodox theory, karma simply means the conservation or immortality of the inner

force of deeds regardless of their author's physical identity. Deeds once committed, good or evil leave permanent effects on the general system of sentient beings, of which the actor is merely a component part, and it is not the actor himself only, but everybody constituting a grand psychic community called "Dharmadhātu (spiritual universe), that suffers or enjoys the outcome of a moral deed.

Because the universe is not a theatre for one particular soul only, on the contrary, it belongs to all sentient beings, each forming a psychic unit, and these units are so intimately knitted together in blood and soul that the effects of even apparently trifling deeds committed by an individual are felt by others just as much and just as surely as the doer himself. Throw an insignificant piece of stone into a vast expanse of water, and it will certainly create an almost endless series of ripples however imperceptible that never stop till they reach the furthest shore. The tremulation thus caused is felt by the sinking stone as much as the water disturbed. The universe that may seem to crude observers merely as a system of crass physical forces is in reality a great spiritual community, and every one of sentient beings forms its component part. This most complicated most subtle most sensitive, and best organised mass of spiritual atoms transmits its current of moral electricity from one particle to another with utmost rapidity and surety. Because this community is at bottom an expression of one Dharmakāya. However diversified

and dissimilar it may appear in its material individual aspect, it is after all no more than an evolution of one pervading essence, in which the multitudinousness of things finds its unity and identity. Therefore, it is for the interests of the community at large, and not for their own welfare only, that sincere Buddhists refrain from transgressing moral laws and are encouraged to promote goodness. Those whose spiritual insight thus penetrates deep into the inner unity and interaction of all human souls are called Bodhisattvas.

It is with this spirit, let me repeat, that pious Buddhists do not wish to keep for themselves any merits created by their acts of love and benevolence, but wish to turn them over (*pariṇāma*) to the deliverance of all sentient creatures from the darkness of ignorance. The most typical way of concluding any religious treatise by Buddhists, therefore, runs generally in the following manner:

'The deep significance of the three karmas as taught by
Buddha

I have thus completed elucidating in accord with the Dharma
and logic

By dint of this merit I pray to deliver all sentient beings
And to make them soon attain to perfect enlightenment¹

Or,

'All the merits arising from this my exposition
May abide and be universally distributed among all beings
And may they ascend in the scale of existence and
increase in bliss and wisdom

¹ *On the Completion of Karma* by Vasubandhu, Nanjo No 1222

And soon attain to an enlightenment supreme, perfect,
great, and far-reaching ' 1

The reason why a moral deed performed by one person would contribute to the attainment by others of supreme enlightenment, is that souls which are ordinarily supposed to be individual and independent of others are not so in fact, but are very closely intermingled with one another, so that a stir produced in one is sooner or later transmitted to another influencing it rightfully or wrongfully. The karmic effect of my own deed determines not only my own future, but to a not little extent that of others, hence those invocations just quoted by pious Buddhists who desire to dedicate all the merits they can attain to the general welfare of the masses.

The ever-increasing tendency of humanity to widen and facilitate communication in every possible way is a phenomenon illustrative of the intrinsic oneness of human souls. Isolation kills, for it is another name for death. Every soul that lives and grows desires to embrace others, to be in communion with them, to be supplemented by them, and to expand infinitely so that all individual souls are brought together and united in the one soul. Under this condition only a man's karma is enabled to influence other people, and his merits can be utilised for the promotion of general enlightenment.

¹ *The Distinguishing of the Mean*, by Vasubandhu Nanjo, 1249

Karma and Determinism

If the irrefragability of karma means the predetermination of our moral life some would reason the doctrine is fatalism pure and simple. It is quite true that our present life is the result of the karma accumulated in our previous existences, and that as long as the karma preserves its vitality there is no chance whatever to escape its consequences good or evil. It is also true that as the meanest sparrow shall not fall on the ground without the knowledge of God and as the very hairs of our heads are all numbered by him so even a single blade of grass does not quiver before the evening breeze without the force of karma. It is also true that if our intellect were not near sighted as it is, we could reduce a possible complexity of the conditions under which our life exists into its simplest terms, and thus predict with mathematical precision the course of a life through which it is destined to pass. If we could record all our previous karma from time immemorial and all its consequences both on ourselves and on those who come in contact with us there would be no difficulty in determining our future life with utmost certainty. The human intellect however, as it happens is incapable of undertaking a work of such an enormous magnitude, we cannot perceive the full significance of determinism but, from the divine point of view determinism seems to be perfectly justified for there cannot be any short sightedness on the part of a world soul as to the destiny of the universe, which

is nothing but its own expression. It is only from the human point of view that we feel uncertain about our final disposition and endeavor to explain existence now from a mechanical, now from a teleological standpoint, and yet, strange enough, at the bottom of our soul we feel that there is something mysterious here which makes us cry, either in despair or in trustful resignation, "Let thy will be done." While this very confidence in "thy will" proves that we have in our inmost consciousness and outside the pale of intellectual analysis a belief in the supreme order, which is absolutely preordained and which at least is not controllable by our finite, limited, fragmentary mind, yet the doctrine of karma must not be understood in the strictest sense of fatalism.

As far as a general theory of determinism is concerned, Buddhism has no objection to it. Grant that there is a law of causation, that every deed, actualised or thought of, leaves something behind, and that this something becomes a determining factor for our future life, then how could we escape the conclusion that "each of us is inevitable" as Whitman sings? Religious confidence in a divine will that is supposed to give us always the best of things, is in fact no more than a determinism. But if, in applying the doctrine to our practical life, we forget to endeavor to unfold all the possibilities that might lie in us, but could be awakened only after strenuous efforts, there will be no moral characters, no personal responsibility, no noble aspirations, the mind will be nothing but a reflex nervous system and life a sheer machinery.

In fact karma is not a machine which is not incapable of regeneration and self-multiplication. Karma is a wonderful organic power, it grows, it expands, and even gives birth to a new karma. It is like unto a grain of mustard, the least of all seeds, but, being full of vitality, it grows as soon as it comes in contact with the nourishing soil and becometh a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Its mystery is like that of sympathetic waves that pass through all the hearts which feel the great deeds of a hero or listen to the story of a self-sacrificing mother. Karma, good or evil is contagious and sympathetic in its work. Even a most insignificant act of goodness reaps an unexpectedly rich crop. Even to the vilest rogue comes a chance for repentance by dint of a single good karma ever effected in his life, which has extended through many a kalpa. And the most wonderful thing in our spiritual world is that the karma thus bringing repentance and Nirvāṇa to the heart of the meanest awakens and rekindles a similar karma potentially slumbering in other hearts and leads them to the final abode of enlightenment.

Inasmuch as we confine ourselves to general, superficial view of the theory of karma, it leads to a form of determinism, but in our practical life which is a product of extremely complicated factors, the doctrine of karma allows in us all kinds of possibilities and all chances of development. We thus escape the mechanical conception of life, we are saved from the despair of pre-determination, though this is true to a great extent,

and we are assured of the actualisation of hopes, however remote it may be. Though the curse of evil karma may sometimes hang upon us very heavily, there is no reason to bury our aspirations altogether in the grave, on the contrary, let us bear it bravely and perform all the acts of goodness to destroy the last remnant of evil and to mature the stock of good karma.

The Maturing of Good Stock (kuṣalamûla) and the Accumulation of merits (punyaskandha).

One of the most significant facts which we cannot well afford to ignore while treating of the doctrine of karma is the Buddhist belief that Çâkyamuni reached his supreme Buddhahood only after a long practise of the six virtues of perfection (*paramitâs*) through many a rebirth. This belief constitutes the very foundation of the ethics of Buddhism and has all important bearings on the doctrine of karma.

The doctrine of karma ethically considered is this: Sentient beings can attain to perfection not by an intervention from on high but through long steady, unflinching personal efforts towards the actualisation of ideals or in other words, towards the maturing of good stock (*kuṣalamûla*) and the accumulation of merits (*punyaskandha*). This can be accomplished only through the karma of good deeds untiringly practised throughout many a generation. Each single act of goodness we perform to day is recorded with

strict accuracy in the annals of human evolution and is so much the gain for the cause of righteousness. On the contrary, every deed of ill will, every thought of self-aggrandisement, every word of impurity, every assertion of egoism, is a drawback to the perfection of humanity. To speak concretely, the Buddha represents the crystallisation in the historical person of Çākṣyamuni of all the good karma that was accumulated in innumerable kalpas previous to his birth. And if Devadatta, as legend has him, was really the enemy of the Buddha, he symbolises in him the evil karma that was being stored up with the good deeds of all Buddhas. Later Buddhism has thus elaborated to represent in these two historical figures the concrete results of good and evil karma, and tries to show in what direction its followers should exercise their spiritual energy.

The doctrine of karma is, therefore, really the theory of evolution and heredity as working in our moral field. As Walt Whitman fitly sings, in every one of us, "converging objects of the universe" are perpetually flowing, through every one of us is "afflatus surging and surging — the current and index. And these converging objects and this afflatus are no more than our karma which is interwoven in our being and which is being matured from the very beginning of consciousness upon the earth. Each generation either retards or furthers the maturing of karma and transmits to the succeeding one its stock either impaired or augmented. Those who are blind enough not to

see the significance of life, those who take their ego for the sole reality, and those who ignore the spiritual inheritance accumulated from time immemorial, — are the most worthless, most ungrateful, and most irresponsible people of the world Buddhism calls them the children of Māra engaged in the work of destruction.

Dr G R Wilson of Scotland states a very pretty story about a royal robe in his article on "The Sense of Danger" (*The Monist*, 1903, April), which graphically illustrates how potential karma stored from time out of mind is saturated in every fibre of our subliminal consciousness or in the *Ālayavijnāna*, as Buddhists might say. The story runs as follows:

"An Oriental robe it was, whose beginning was in a prehistoric dynasty of which the hieroglyphics are undecipherable. With that pertinacity and durability so characteristic of the East, this royal garment has been handed down, not through hundreds of years, but through hundreds of generations,—generations, some of them, unconsciously long and stale and dreary, others short and quick and merry. A garment of kings, this, and of queens, a garment to which, as tradition prescribed, each monarch added something of quality,—a jewel of price, a patch of gold, a hem of rich embroidery,—and with each contribution a legend, worked into the imperishable fibre, told the story of the giver. Did something of the personality of these kings and queens linger in the work of their hands? If so, the robe was no dead thing, no mere covering to be lightly assumed or lightly laid aside, but a living

power, royal influence, and the wearer, all unwitting, must have taken on something of the character of the dead. It is a princess of the royal blood, perhaps, sensitive and mystical, trembling on the apprehensive verge of monarchy, who dons the robe, and as she dons it, tingles to its message. These great rubies that blaze upon its front are the souvenirs of bloody conquerors. As she fingers them idly, she is thrilled with an emotion she does not understand, for in her blood something answers to the fighting spirit they embody. Pearls are for peace. That rope has been strung by kings and queens who favored art and learning, and as the girl's fingers stray towards them the inspiration changes and her mind reverts to the purposes of the civilised scholar. Here is a gaudy hem, the legacy of an unfaithful queen, steeped in intrigue all her life until her murder ended it, and as the maiden lifts it to examine it more closely, she learns with shame and blushes, yet not knowing what has wrought this change in her, that, deep down in her character, are mischievous possibilities, possibilities of wickedness and disgrace that will dog the footsteps of her reign. Suchlike are the suggestions which the hidden parts of the mind bring forth, and in such subtle manner are they born.

The doctrine of karma thus declares that an act of love and good will you are performing here is not for your selfish interests, but it simply means the appreciation of the works of your worthy ancestors and the discharge of your duties towards

all humanity and your contribution to the world-treasury of moral ideals. Mature good stock, accumulate merits, purify evil karma, remove the ego-hindrances, and cultivate love for all beings; and the heavenly gate of Nirvâna will be opened not only to you, but to the entire world.

We can sing with Walt Whitman the immortality of karma and the eternal progress of humanity, thus:

"Did you guess anything lived only its moment?

The world does not so exist—no part palpable or impalpable so exist,

No consummation exists without being from some long previous consummation—and that from some other,

Without the farthest conceivable one coming a bit nearer the beginning than any " "

Immortality

We read in the *Milinda-pañha* :

"Your Majesty, it is as if a man were to ascend to the story of a house with a light, and eat there; and the light in burning were to set fire to the thatch; and the thatch in burning were to set fire to the house; and the house in burning were to set fire to the village; and the people of the village were to seize him, and say, 'Why, O man, did you set fire to the village?' and he were to say, 'I did not set fire to the village. The fire of the lamp by whose light I ate was a different one from the one which set fire to the village' ;

¹"Manhattan's Streets I Saunter'd, Pondering " I might have quoted the whole poem, if not for limitation of space

and they, quarreling, were to come to you. Whose cause, Your Majesty, would you sustain?"

"That of the people of the village, Reverend Sir," etc.

"And why?"

"Because, in spite of what the man might say, the latter fire sprang from the former."

"In exactly the same way, Your Majesty, although the name and form which is born into the next existence is different from the name and form which is to end at death, nevertheless, it is sprung from it. Therefore is one not freed from one's evil deeds."

The above is the Buddhist notion of individual *identity and its conservation, which denies the immortality of the ego-soul and upholds that of karma.*

Another good way, perhaps, of illustrating this doctrine is to follow the growth and perpetuation of the seed. The seed is in fact a concrete expression of karma. When a plant reaches a certain stage of development, it blooms and bears fruit. This fruit contains in it a latent energy which under favorable conditions grows to a mature plant of its own kind. The new plant now repeats the processes which its predecessors went through, and an eternal perpetuation of the plant is attained. The life of an individual plant cannot be permanent according to its inherent nature, it is destined to be cut short some time in its course. But this is not the case with the current of an ever-lasting vitality that has been running in the plant ever since the beginning of the world. Because this current is not individual in its nature and stands above the vicissi-

tudes which take place in the life of particular plants. It may not be manifested in its kinetic form all the time, but potentially it is ever present in the being of the seed. Changes are simply a matter of form, and do not interfere with the current of life in the plant, which is preserved in the universe as the energy of vegetation.

• This energy of vegetation is that which is manifested in a mature plant, that which makes it blossom in the springtime, that which goes to seed, that which lies apparently dormant in the seeds, and that which resuscitates them to sprout among favorable surroundings. This energy of vegetation, this mysterious force, when stated in Buddhist phraseology, is nothing else than the vegetative expression of karma, which in the biological world constitutes the law of heredity, or the transmission of acquired character, or some other laws which might be discovered by the biologist. And it is when this force manifests itself in the moral realm of human affairs that karma obtains its proper significance as the law of moral causation.

Now, there are several forms of transmission, by means of which the karma of a person or a people or a nation or a race is able to perpetuate itself to eternity. A few of them are described below.

One may be called genealogical, or, perhaps, biological. Suppose here are descendants of an illustrious family, some of whose ancestors distinguished themselves by bravery, or benevolence, or intelligence, or by some other praiseworthy deeds or faculties. These

people are as a rule respected by their neighbors as if their ancestral spirits were transmitted through generations and still lingering among their consanguineous successors. *Some of them in the line might* have even been below the normal level in their intellect and morals, but this fact does not altogether nullify the possibility and belief that others of their family might some day develop the faculties possessed by the forefathers, dormant as they appear now, through the inspiration they could get from the noble examples of the past. The respect they are enjoying and the possibility of inspiration they may have are all the work of the karma generated by the ancestors. The author or authors of the noble karma are all gone now, their bones have long returned to their elements, their ego-souls are no more, their concrete individual personalities are things of the past; but their karma is still here and as fresh as it was on the day of its generation and will so remain till the end of time. If some of them, on the other hand, left a black record behind them, the evil karma will tenaciously cling to the history of the family, and the descendants will have to suffer the curse as long as its vitality is kept up, no matter how innocent they themselves are.

Here one important thing I wish to note is the mysterious way in which evil karma works. Evil does not always generate evils only; it very frequently turns out to be a condition, if not a cause, which will induce a moral being to overcome it with his

utmost spiritual efforts. His being conscious of the very fact that his family history is somehow besmirched with dark spots, would rekindle in his heart a flickering light of goodness. His stock of good karma finally being brought into maturity, his virtues would then eclipse the evils of the past and turn a new page before him, which is full of bliss and glory. Everything in this world, thus, seems to turn to be merely a means for the final realisation of Good. Buddhists ascribe this spiritual phenomenon to the virtues of the upâya (expediency) of the Dharmakâya or Amitâbha Buddha.¹

To return to the subject. It does not need any further illustration to show that all these things which have been said about the family are also true of the race, the tribe, clan, nation, or any other form of community. History of mankind in all its manifold aspects of existence is nothing but a grand drama visualising the Buddhist doctrine of karmic immortality. It is like an immense ocean whose boundaries nobody knows and the waves of events now swelling and surging, now ebbing, now whirling, now refluxing, in all times, day and night, illustrate how the laws

¹ If we understand the following words of Tolstoi in the light which we gain from the Buddhist doctrine of karmic immortality, we shall perhaps find more meaning in them than the author himself wished to impart. "My brother who is dead acts upon me now more strongly than he did in life; he even penetrates my being and lifts me up towards him."

of karma are at work in this actual life. One act provokes another and that a third and so on to eternity without ever losing the chain of karmic causation.

Next, we come to a form of karma which might be called historical. By this I mean that a man's karma can be immortalised by some historical objects, such as buildings, literary works, productions of art, implements, or instruments. In fact, almost any object, human or natural, which, however insignificant in itself, is associated with the memory of a great man, bears his karma, and transmits it to posterity.

Everybody is familiar with the facts that all literary work embodies in itself the author's soul and spirit, and that posterity can feel his living presence in the thoughts and sentiments expressed there, and that whenever the reader draws his inspiration from the work and actualises it in action, the author and the reader, though corporeally separate and living in different times, must be said spiritually feeling the pulsation of one and the same heart. And the same thing is true of productions of art. When we enter a gallery decorated with the noble works of Græcan or Roman artists, we feel as if we were breathing right in the midst of these art-loving people and seem to reawaken in us the same impressions that were received by them. We forget, as they did, the reality of our particular existence, we are unconsciously raised above it, and our imagination is filled with things not earthly. What a mysterious power it is!—the

power by which those inanimate objects carry us away to a world of ideals! What a mysterious power it is that reawakens the spirits of by-gone artists on a sheet of canvas or in a piece of marble! It was not indeed entirely without truth that primitive or ignorant people intuitively believed in the spiritual power of idols. What they failed to grasp was the distinction between the subjective presence of a spirit and its objective reality. As far as their religious feeling, and not their critical intellect, was concerned, they were perfectly justified in believing in idolatry. Taking all in all, these facts unmistakably testify the Buddhist doctrine of the immortality of karma. A chord of karma touched by mortals of bygone ages still vibrates in their works, and the vibration with its full force is transmitted to the sympathetic souls down to the present day.

Architectural creations bear out the doctrine of karma with no less force than works of art and literature. As the uppermost bricks on an Egyptian pyramid would fall on the ground with the same amount of energy that required to raise them up in the times of Pharaohs, as a burning piece of coal in the furnace that was dug out from the heart of the earth emits the same quantity of heat that it absorbed from the sun some hundred thousand years ago; even so every insignificant bit of rock or brick or cement we may find among the ruins of Babylonian palaces, Indian topes, Persian kiosks, Egyptian obelisks, or Roman pantheons, is fraught with the same spirit and soul that actuated

the ancient peoples to construct those gigantic architectural wonders. The spirit is here, not in its individual form, but in its karmaic presence. When we pick these insignificant, unseemly pieces, our souls become singularly responsive to inspirations coming from those of the past, and our mental eyes vividly perceive the splendor of the gods, glory of the kings, peace of the nation, prosperity of the peoples, etc., etc. Because our souls and theirs are linked with the chain of karmaic causation through the medium of those visible remains of ancient days. Because the karma of those old peoples is still breathing its immortality in those architectural productions and sending its sympathetic waves out to the beholders. When thus we come to be convinced of the truth of the immortality of karma, we can truly exclaim with Christians, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

It is hardly necessary to give any further illustration to establish the doctrine of karma concerning its historical significance. All scientific apparatus and instruments are an undying eye-witness of the genius of the inventors. All industrial machines and agricultural implements most concretely testify the immortality of karma created by the constructors, in exact proportion as they are beneficial to the general welfare and progress of humanity. The instruments or machines or implements may be superseded by later and better ones, and possibly altogether forgotten by succeeding generations, but this does not annul the fact that the

improved ones were only possible through the knowledge and experience which came from the use of the older ones, in other words, that the ideas and thoughts of the former inventors are still surviving through those of their successors, just as much as in the case of genealogical karma-transmission. Whatever garb the karma of a person may wear in its way down to posterity, it is ever there where its inspiration is felt. Even in an article of most trivial significance, even in a piece of rag, or in a slip of time-worn paper, only let there be an association with the memory of the deceased; and an unutterable feeling imperceptibly creeps into the heart of the beholder; and if the deceased were known for his saintliness or righteousness, this would be an opportunity for our inspiration and moral elevation according to how our own karma at that moment is made up.

We now come to see more closely the spiritual purport of karmaic activity. Any intelligent reader could infer from what has been said above what important bearing the Buddhist doctrine of karma has on our moral and spiritual life. The following remarks, however, will greatly help him to understand the full extent of the doctrine and to pass an impartial judgment on its merits.

Here, if not anywhere else, looms up most conspicuously the characteristic difference between Buddhism and Christianity as to their conception of soul-activity. Christianity, if I understand it rightly, conceives our soul-phenomena as the work of an

individual ego-entity, which keeps itself mysteriously hidden somewhere within the body. To Christians, the soul is a metaphysical being, and its incarnation in the flesh is imprisonment. It groans after emancipation, it craves for the celestial abode, where, after bodily death, it can enjoy all the blessings due to its naked existence. It finds the nectar of immortality up in Heaven and in the presence of God the father and Christ the son, and not in the perpetuation of karma in this universe. The soul of the wicked, on the other hand, is eternally damned, if it is conceded that they have any soul. As soon as it is liberated from the bodily incarceration, it is hurled into the infernal fire, and is there consumed suffering unspeakable agony. Christianity, therefore, does not believe in the transmigration or reincarnation of a soul. A soul once departed from the flesh never returns to it; it is either living an eternal life in Heaven or suffering an instant annihilation in Hell. *This is the necessary conclusion from their premises of an individual concrete ego-soul.*

Buddhism, however, does not teach the metaphysical existence of the soul. All our mental and spiritual experiences, it declares, are due to the operations of karma which inherits its efficiency from its previous "seeds of activity" (*karmabija*), and which has brought the five skandhas into the present state of co-ordination. The present karma, while in its force, generates in turn the "seeds of activity" which under favorable conditions grow to maturity again. Therefore, as long

as the force of karma is thus successively generated, there are the five skandhas constantly coming into existence and working co-ordinately as a person. Karma-reproduction, so to speak, effected in this manner, is the Buddhist conception of the transmigration of a soul.

A Japanese national hero, General Kusunoki Masashige, who was an orthodox Buddhist, is said to have uttered the following words when he fell in the battle-field: "I will be reborn seven times yet and complete discharging my duties for the Imperial House." And he did not utter these words to no purpose. Because even to-day, after the lapse of more than seven hundred years, his spirit is still alive among his countrymen, and indeed his bronze statue on horse-back is solemnly guarding the Japanese Imperial palace. He was reborn more than seven times and will be reborn as long as the Japanese as a nation exist on earth. This constant rebirth or reincarnation means no more nor less than the immortality of karma. Says Buddha: "Ye disciples, take after my death those moral precepts and doctrines which were taught to you for my own person, for I live in them." To live in karma, and not as an ego-entity, is the Buddhist conception of immortality. Therefore, the Buddhists will perfectly agree with the sentiment expressed by a noted modern poet in these lines:

"We live in deeds, not years, in thoughts, not in breaths:
 In feelings, not in figures on a dial,
 We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
 Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

Some may like' to call this kind of immortality unsatisfactory, and impetuously demand that the ego-soul, instead of mysterious force of karma, should be made immortal, as it is more tangible and better appreciated by the masses. The Buddhist response to such a demand would be; "If their intellectual and moral insight is not developed enough to see truth in the theory of karma, why, we shall let them adhere as long as they please to their crude, primitive faith and rest contented with it." Even the Buddha could not make children find pleasure in abstract metaphysical problems, whatever truth and genuine spiritual consolation there might be in them. What their hearts are after are toys and fairy-tales and parables. Therefore, a motto of Buddhism is: "Minister to the patients according to their wants and conditions." We cannot make a plant grow even an inch higher by artificially pulling its roots, we have but to wait till it is ready for development. Unless a child becomes a man, we must not expect of him to put away childish things.

The conclusion that could be drawn from the above is obvious. If we desire immortality, let there be the maturing of good karma and the cleansing of the heart from the contamination of evils. In good karma we are made to live eternally, but in evil one we are doomed, not only ourselves but every one that follows our steps on the path of evils. Karma is always generative; therefore, good karma is infinite bliss, and evil one is eternal curse. It was for this reason that at the appearance of the Buddha in the Jambudvīpa

heaven and earth resounded with the joyous acclamation of gods and men. It was a signal triumph for the cause of goodness. The ideal of moral perfection found a concrete example in the person of Çâkyamuni. It showed how the stock of good karma accumulated and matured from the beginning of consciousness on earth could be crystalised in one person and brought to an actuality even in this world of woes. The Buddha, therefore, was the culmination of all the good karma previously stored up by his spiritual ancestors. And he was at the same time the starting point for the fermentation of new karma, because his moral "seeds of activity" which were generated during his lifetime have been scattered liberally wherever his virtues and teachings could be promulgated. That is, his karma-seeds have been sown in the souls of all sentient beings. Every one of these seeds which are infinite in number will become a new centre of moral activity. In proportion how strong it grows and begins to bear fruit, it destroys the seeds of evil doers. Good karma is a combined shield and sword, while it protects itself it destroys all that is against it. Therefore, good karma is not only statically immortal, but it is dynamically so; that is to say, its immortality is not a mere absence of birth and death, but a constant positive increase in its moral efficiency.

Pious Buddhists believe that every time Buddha's name is invoked with a heart free from evil thoughts, he enters right into the soul and becomes integral part of his being. This does not mean, however, that

and rest satisfied, though usually unconsciously, with assertions which are conflicting when critically examined, but we cannot disregard by any means those of the religious sentiment, which finds satisfaction only in the very fact of things. If it ever harbored some flagrant contradictions in the name of faith, it was because its ever-pressing demands had to be met with even at the expense of reason. The truth is: the religious consciousness first of all demands fact, and when it attains that, it is not of much consequence to it whether or not its intellectual interpretation is logically tenable. If on the other hand logic be all-important and demand the first consideration and the sentiment had to follow its trail without a murmuring, our life would surely lose its savory aspect, turn tasteless, our existence would become void, the world would be a mere succession of meaningless events, and what remains would be nothing *else than devastation, barrenness, and universal misery*. The truth is, in this life the will predominates and the intellect subserves, which explains the fact that while all existing religions on the one hand display some logical inaccuracy and on the other hand a mechanical explanation of the world is gaining ground more and more, religion is still playing an important part everywhere in our practical life. Abstraction is good for the exercises of the intellect, but when it is the question of life and death we must have something more substantial and of more vitality than theorisation. It may not be a mathematically exact

and certain proposition, but it must be a working, living, real theory, that is, it must be a faith born of the inmost consciousness of our being.

What practical transformations then has the doctrine of Suchness, in order to meet the religious demands, to suffer?

God.

Buddhism does not use the word God. The word is rather offensive to most of its followers, especially when it is intimately associated in vulgar minds with the idea of a creator who produced the world out of nothing, caused the downfall of mankind, and, touched by the pang of remorse, sent down his only son to save the depraved. But, on account of this, Buddhism must not be judged as an atheism which endorses an agnostic, materialistic interpretation of the universe. Far from it Buddhism outspokenly acknowledges the presence in the world of a reality which transcends the limitations of phenomenality, but which is nevertheless immanent everywhere and manifests itself in its full glory, and in which we live and move and have our being

God or the religious object of Buddhism is generally called Dharmakāya-Buddha and occasionally Vairocana-Buddha or Vairocana-Dharmakāya-Buddha, still another name for it is Amitābha-Buddha or Amitāyur-Buddha,— the latter two being mostly used by the followers of the Sukhāvati sect of Japan and China.

Buddha's ego-substratum which might have been enjoying its immortal spiritual bliss in the presence of an anthropomorphic God descends on earth at the invocation of his name and renders in that capacity whatever help the suppliant needs. It means, on the other hand, that the Buddhist awakens in his personal karma that which constituted Buddhahood in the Buddha and nourishes it to maturity. That which constitutes Buddhahood is not the personal ego of the Buddha, but his karma. Every chemical element, whenever occasioned to befree itself from a combination, never fails to generate heat which it absorbed at the time of combination with other elements; and this takes place no matter how remote the time of combination was. It is even so with the karma-seed of Buddha. It might have been in the barren soil of a sinful heart, and, being deeply buried there for many a year, might have been forgotten altogether by the owner. But, sooner or later, it will never fail to grow under favorable conditions and generate what it gained from the Buddha in the beginning of the world. And this regeneration will not be merely chemical, but predominantly biological; for it is the law which conditions the immortality of karma.

PRACTICAL BUDDHISM.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DHARMAKĀYA.

WE have considered the doctrine of Suchness (*Bhūtatathâtā*) under "Speculative Buddhism," where it appeared altogether too abstract to be of any practical use to our earthly life. The theory as such did not seem to have any immediate bearings on our religious consciousness. The fact is, it must pass through some practical modification before it fully satisfies our spiritual needs. As there is no concrete figure in this world that is a perfect type of mathematical exactitude,—since everything here must be perceived through our more or less distorted physical organs; even so with pure reason however perfect in itself, it must appear to us more or less modified while passing through our affective-intellectual objectives. This modification of pure reason, however, is necessary from the human point of view, because mere abstraction is contentless, lifeless, and has no value for our practical life, and again, because our religious cravings will not be satisfied with empty concepts lacking vitality.

We may sometimes ignore the claims of reason

and rest satisfied, though usually unconsciously, with assertions which are conflicting when critically examined, but we cannot disregard by any means those of the religious sentiment, which finds satisfaction only in the very fact of things. If it ever harbored some flagrant contradictions in the name of faith, it was because its ever-pressing demands had to be met with even at the expense of reason. The truth is: the religious consciousness first of all demands fact, and when it attains that, it is not of much consequence to it whether or not its intellectual interpretation is logically tenable. If on the other hand logic be all-important and demand the first consideration and the sentiment had to follow its trail without a murmuring, our life would surely lose its savory aspect, turn tasteless, our existence would become void, the world would be a mere succession of meaningless events, and what remains would be nothing else than devastation, barrenness, and universal misery. The truth is, in this life the will predominates and the intellect subserves; which explains the fact that while all existing religions on the one hand display some logical inaccuracy and on the other hand a mechanical explanation of the world is gaining ground more and more, religion is still playing an important part everywhere in our practical life. Abstraction is good for the exercises of the intellect, but when it is the question of life and death we must have something more substantial and of more vitality than theorisation. It may not be a mathematically exact

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Again, very frequently we find Çākyaṃuni, the Buddha, and the Tathāgata stripped of his historical personality and identified with the highest truth and reality. These, however, by no means exhaust a legion of names invented by the fertile imagination of Buddhists for their object of reverence as called forth by their various spiritual needs.

Dharmakāya.

Western scholars usually translate Dharmakāya by "Body of the Law" meaning by the Law the doctrine set forth by Çākyaṃuni the Buddha. It is said that when Buddha was preparing himself to enter into eternal Nirvāṇa, he commanded his disciples to revere the Dharma or religion taught by him as his own person, because a man continues to live in the work, deeds, and words left behind himself. So, Dharmakāya came to be understood by Western scholars as meaning the person of Buddha incarnated in his religion. This interpretation of the term is not very accurate, however, and is productive of some very serious misinterpretations concerning the fundamental doctrines of Mahāyānism. Historically, the Body of the Law as the Buddha incarnate might have been the sense of Dharmakāya, as we can infer from the occasional use of the term in some Hinayāna texts. But as it is used by Eastern Buddhists, it has acquired an entirely new significance, having nothing to do with the body of religious teaching established by the Buddha.

This transformation in the conception of Dharmakāya, has been effected by the different interpretation the term Dharma came to receive from the hand of the Mahāyānists. Dharma is a very pregnant word and covers a wide range of meaning. It comes from the root *dhr*, which means "to hold," "to carry", "to bear," and the primitive sense of dharma was "that which carries or bears or supports," and then it came to signify "that which forms the norm, or regulates the course of things," that is, "law," "institution," "rule," "doctrine," then, "duty," "justice," "virtue," "moral merit," "character," "attribute," "essential quality," "substance," "that which exists," "reality," "being," etc., etc. The English equivalent most frequently used for dharma by Oriental scholars is law or doctrine. This may be all right as far as the Pāli texts go; but when we wish to apply this interpretation to the Mahāyāna terms, such as Dharmadhātu, Dharmakāya, Dharmalakṣa, Dharmaloka, etc., we are placed in an awkward position and are at a loss how to get at the meaning of those terms. There are passages in Mahāyāna literature in which the whole significance of the text depends upon how we understand the word dharma. And it may even be said that one of the many reasons why Christian students of Buddhism so frequently fail to recognise the importance of Mahāyānism is due to their misinterpretation of dharma. Max Mueller, therefore, rightly remarks in his introduction to an English translation of the *Vajracchedika Sūtra*, when he says "If we

were always to translate dharma by law, it seems to me that the whole drift of our treatise would become unintelligible." Not only that particular text of Mahâyânism, but its entire literature would become utterly incomprehensible.

In Mahâyânism Dharma means in many cases "thing," "substance," or "being," or "reality," both in its particular and in its general sense, though it is also frequently used in the sense of law or doctrine. Kâya may be rendered "body," not in the sense of personality, but in that of system, unity, and organised form. Dharmakâya, the combination of dharma and kâya, thus means the organised totality of things or the principle of cosmic unity, though not as a purely philosophical concept, but as an object of the religious consciousness. Throughout this work, however, the original Sanskrit form will be retained in preference to any English equivalents that have been used heretofore; for Dharmakâya conveys to the minds of Eastern Buddhists a peculiar religious flavor, which, when translated by either God or the All or some abstract philosophical terms, suffers considerably.

Dharmakâya as Religious Object.

As aforesaid, the Dharmakâya is not a product of philosophical reflection and is not exactly equivalent to Suchness; it has a religious signification as the object of the religious consciousness. The Dharmakâya is a soul, a willing and knowing being, one that is

will and intelligence, thought and action. It is, as understood by the Mahāyānists, not an abstract metaphysical principle like Suchness, but it is living spirit, that manifests itself in nature as well as in thought. The universe as an expression of this spirit is not a meaningless display of blind forces, nor is it an arena for the struggle of diverse mechanical powers. Further, Buddhists ascribe to the Dharmakāya innumerable merits and virtues and an absolute perfect intelligence, and makes it an inexhaustible fountain-head of love and compassion; and it is in this that the Dharmakāya finally assumes a totally different aspect from a mere metaphysical principle, cold and lifeless.

The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* gives some comprehensive statements concerning the nature of the Dharmakāya as follows:

"The Dharmakāya, though manifesting itself in the triple world, is free from impurities and desires. It unfolds itself here, there, and everywhere responding to the call of karma It is not an individual reality, it is not a false existence, but is universal and pure. It comes from nowhere, it goes to nowhere, it does not assert itself, nor is it subject to annihilation. It is forever serene and eternal. It is the One, devoid of all determinations. This Body of Dharma has no boundary, no quarters, but is embodied in all bodies. Its freedom or spontaneity is incomprehensible, its spiritual presence in things corporeal is incomprehensible. All forms of corporeality are involved therein, it is able to create all things. Assuming any concrete

material body as required by the nature and condition of karma, it illuminates all creations. Though it is the treasure of intelligence, it is void of particularity.

There is no place in the universe where this Body does not prevail. The universe becomes, but this Body forever remains. It is free from all opposites and contraries, yet it is working in all things to lead them to Nirvâna."

More Detailed Characterisation.

The above gives us a general, concise view as to what the Dharmakâya is, but let me quote the following more detailed description of it, in order that we may more clearly and definitely see into the characteristically Buddhistic conception of the highest being.¹

"O ye, sons of Buddha! The Tathâgata² is not a particular dharma, nor a particular form of activity, nor has it a particular body, nor does it abide in a particular place, nor is its work of salvation confined to one particular people. On the contrary, it involves in itself infinite dharmas, infinite activities, infinite bodies, infinite spaces, and universally works for the salvation of all things.

"O ye, sons of Buddha! It is like unto space. Space³ contains in itself all material existences and all the vacuums that obtain between them. Again, it establish-

¹ The *Avatamsaka Sûtra*, Chinese translation by Buddhahabdra, fasc. XXXIV.

² That is the Dharmakâya personified.

³ In Hindu philosophy space is always conceived as an objective entity in which all things exist.

es itself in all possible quarters, and yet we cannot say of it that it is or it is not in this particular spot, for space has no palpable form. Even so with the Dharmakâya of the Tathâgata. It presents itself in all places, in all directions, in all dharmas, and in all beings; yet the Dharmakâya itself has not been thereby particularised. Because the Body of the Tathâgata has no particular body but manifests itself everywhere and anywhere in response to the nature and condition of things.

"O ye, sons of Buddha! It is like unto space. Space is boundless, comprehends in itself all existence, and yet shows no trace of passion [partiality] It is even so with the Dharmakâya of the Tathâgata. It illuminates all good works worldly as well as religious, but it betrays no passion or prejudice. Why? Because the Dharmakâya is perfectly free from all passions and prejudices. ¹

"O ye, sons of Buddha! It is like unto the Sun. The benefits conferred by the light of the sun upon all living beings on earth are incalculable - e.g. by dispelling darkness it gives nourishment to all trees, herbs, grains, plants, and grass, it vanquishes humidity; it illuminates ether whereby benefitting all the

¹ This should be understood in the sense that "God maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" The Dharmakâya is universal in its love, as space is in its comprehensiveness. Because it is absolutely free from human desires and passions that are the product of egoism and therefore tend always to be discriminative and exclusive

living beings in air; its rays penetrate into the waters whereby bringing forth the beautiful lotus flowers into full blossom; it impartially shines on all figures and forms and brings into completion all the works on earth. Why? Because from the sun emanate infinite rays of life-giving light.

"O ye, sons of Buddha! It is even so with the Sun-Body of the Tathâgata which in innumerable ways bestows benefits upon all beings. That is, it benefits us by destroying evils, all good things thus being quickened to growth; it benefits us with its universal illumination which vanquishes the darkness of ignorance harbored in all beings; it benefits us through its great compassionate heart which saves and protects all beings; it benefits us through its great loving heart which delivers all beings from the misery of birth and death; it benefits us by the establishment of a good religion whereby we are all strengthened in our moral activities; it benefits us by giving us a firm belief in the truth which cleanses all our spiritual impurities; it benefits by helping us to understand the doctrine by virtue of which we are not led to disavow the law of causation; it benefits us with a divine vision which enables us to observe the metempsychosis of all beings; it benefits us by avoiding injurious deeds which may destroy the stock of merits accumulated by all beings; it benefits us with an intellectual light which unfolds the mind-flowers of all beings; it benefits us with an aspiration whereby we are enlivened to practice all that constitutes Buddhahood. Why? Because the Sun-

sattvas and then gradually pass over to all common mortals, etc.' The Light is universal and illuminates everything without any prejudice, yet on account of the diversity that obtains among sentient beings as to their character, aspirations, etc., the Light of Intelligence is diversely perceived by them. .

"O ye, sons of Buddha! When the sun rises above the horizon, those people born blind, on account their defective sight, cannot see the light at all, but they are nevertheless benefited by the sunlight, for it gives them just as much as to any other beings all that is necessary for the maintenance of life: it dispels dampness and coldness and makes them feel agreeable, it destroys all the injurious germs that are produced on account of the absence of sunshine, and thus keeps the blind as well as the not-blind comfortable and healthy.

"O ye, sons of Buddha! It is even so with the Sun of Intelligence of the Tathâgata. All those beings whose spiritual vision is blinded by false doctrine, or by the violation of Buddha's precepts, or by ignorance, or by evil influences, never perceive the Light of Intelligence; because they are devoid of faith. But they are nevertheless benefited by the Light; for it disperses indiscriminately for all beings the sufferings arising from the four elements, and gives them physical comforts, for it destroys the root of all passions, prejudices, and pains for unbelievers as well as for believers... By virtue of this omnipresent Light of Intelligence, the Bodhisattvas will attain perfect purity and the

knowledge of all things, the Nidānabuddhas and Āra-
vakas will destroy all passions and desires; mortals
poorly endowed and those born blind will rid of
impurities, control the senses, and believe in the four
views;¹ and those creatures living in the evil paths
of existence such as hell, world of ghosts, and the
animal realm, will be freed from their evils and torture
and will, after death, be born in the human or cele-
stial world....

"O ye, sons of Buddha! The Light of Dharmakāya
is like unto the full moon which has four wondrous
attributes: (1) It outdoes in its brilliance all stars and
satellites; (2) It shows in its size increase and decrease
as observable in the Jambudvīpa; (3) Its reflection is
seen in every drop or body of clear water; (4) Whoever
is endowed with perfect sight, perceives it vis-a-vis.

"O ye, sons of Buddha! Even so with the Dharmakāya
of the Tathāgata, that has four wondrous attributes (1)
It eclipses the stars of the Nidānabuddhas, Āra-
vakas, etc.; (2) It shows in its earthly life a certain variation
which is due to the different natures of the beings
to whom it manifests itself,² while the Dharmakāya

¹ The four views are. That the physical body is productive
of impurities, that sensuality causes pain, that the individual soul
is not permanent, and that all things are devoid of the Atman.

² That is to say: The Dharmakāya, that assumes all forms
of existence according to what class of being it is manifesting
itself, is sometimes conceived by the believers to be a short-
lived god, sometimes an immortal spirit, sometimes a celestial
being of one hundred kalpas, and sometimes an existence of
only a moment. As there are so many different dispositions,

itself is eternal and shows no increase or decrease in any way; (3) Its reflection is seen in the Bodhi (intelligence) of every pure-hearted sentient being; (4) All who understand the Dharma and obtain deliverance, each according to his own mental calibre, think that they have really recognised in their own way the Tathâgata face to face, while the Dharmakâya itself is not a particular object of understanding, but universally brings all Buddha-works into completion.

"O ye, sons of Buddha! The Dharmakâya is like unto the Great Brahmarâja who governs three thousand chiliocosms. The Râja by a mysterious trick makes himself seen universally by all living beings in his realm and causes them to think that each of them has seen him face to face, but the Râja himself has never divided his own person nor is he in possession of diverse features.

"O ye, sons of Buddha! Even so with the Tathâgata; he has never divided himself into many, nor has he ever assumed diverse features. But all beings, each according to his understanding and strength of faith, recognise the Body of the Tathâgata, while he has never made this thought that he will show himself to such and such particular people and not to others. . .

"O ye, sons of Buddha! The Dharmakâya is like unto the maniratna in the waters, whose wondrous

characters, karmas, intellectual attainments, moral environments, etc., so there are as many Dharmakâyas as subjectively represented in the minds of sentient beings, though the Dharmakâya, objectively considered, is absolutely one

light transforms everything that comes in contact with it to its own color. The eyes that perceive it become purified. Wherever its illumination reaches, there is a marvelous display of gems of every description, which gives pleasure to all beings to see.

"O ye, sons of Buddha! It is even so with the Dharmakâya of the Tathâgata, which may rightly be called the treasure of treasures, the thesaurus of all merits, and the mine of intelligence. Whoever comes in touch with this light, is all transformed into the same color as that of the Buddha. Whoever sees this light, all obtains the purest eye of Dharma. Whoever comes in touch with this light, rids of poverty and suffering, attains wealth and eminence, enjoys the bliss of the incomparable Bodhi"

Dharmakâya and Individual Beings.

From these statements it is evident that the Dharmakâya or the Body of the Tathâgata, or the Body of Intelligence, whatever it may be designated, is not a mere philosophical abstraction, standing aloof from this world of birth and death, of joy and sorrow, calmly contemplates on the folly of mankind, but that it is a spiritual existence which is "absolutely one, is real and true, and forms the *raison d'être* of all beings, transcends all modes of upâya, is free from desires and struggles [or compulsion], and stands outside the pale of our finite understanding" ¹ It is

¹ Asanga's *General Treatise on Mahâyânism*. (*Mahâyâna samparigraha*)

also evident that the Dharmakāya, though itself free from ignorance (*avidyā*) and passion (*kleśa*) and desire (*trṣṇā*), is revealed in the finite and fragmental consciousness of human being, so that we can say in a sense that "this body of mine is the Dharmakāya"—though not absolutely; and also in a generalised form that "the body of all beings is the Dharmakāya, and the Dharmakāya is the body of all beings,"—though in the latter only imperfectly and fractionally realised. As we thus partake something in ourselves of the Dharmakāya, we all are ultimately destined to attain Buddhahood when the human intelligence, Bodhi, is perfectly identified with, or absorbed in, that of the Dharmakāya, and when our earthly life becomes the realisation of the will of the Dharmakāya.

The Dharmakāya as Love.

Here an important consideration forces itself upon us which is, that the Dharmakāya is not only an intelligent mind but a loving heart, that it is not only a god of rigorism who does not allow a hair's breadth deviation from the law of karma, but also an incarnation of mercy that is constantly belaboring to develop the most insignificant merit into a field yielding rich harvests. The Dharmakāya relentlessly punishes the wrong and does not permit the exhaustion of their karma without sufficient reason; and yet its hands are always directing our life toward the actualisation

of supreme goodness. "Pangs of nature, sins of will, defects of doubt, and stains of blood,"—discouraging and gloomy indeed is the karma of evil-doers! But the Dharmakâya, infinite in love and goodness, is incessantly managing to bring this world-transaction to a happy terminus. Every good we do is absorbed in the universal stock of merits which is no more nor less than the Dharmakâya. Every act of lovingkindness we practice is conceived in the womb of Tathâgata, and therein nourished and matured, is again brought out to this world of karma to bear its fruit. Therefore, no life walks on earth with aimless feet, no chaff is thrown into the fire unquenchable. Every existence, great or insignificant, is a reflection of the glory of the Dharmakâya and as such worthy of its all-embracing love.

For further corroboration of this view let us cite at random from a Mahâyâna sūtra: ¹

"With one great loving heart
The thirsty desires of all beings he quencheth with coolness
refreshing,
With compassion, of all doth he think,
Which like space knows no bounds,
Over the world's all creation
With no thought of particularity he revieweth.

"With a great heart compassionate and loving,
All sentient beings by him are embraced,
With means (*upâya*) which are pure, free from stain, and
all excellent,
He doth save and deliver all creatures innumerable.

¹ The *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, chap. 13, "On Merit"

"With unfathomable love and with compassion
All creations caressed by him universally;
Yet free from attachment his heart is.

"As his compassion is great and is infinite,
Bliss unearthly on every being he confereth,
And himself showeth all over the universe;
He'll not rest till all Buddhahood truly attains."

Later Mahâyânists' view of the Dharmakâya.

The above has been quoted almost exclusively from the so-called sūtra literature of Mahâyāna Buddhism, which is distinguished from the other religio-philosophical treatises of the school, because the sūtras are considered to be the accounts of Buddha himself as recorded by his immediate disciples.¹ Let us now see by way of further elucidation what views were held concerning the Dharmakâya by such writers as Asanga, Vasubandhu, etc

We read in the *General Treatise on Mahâyânism* by Asanga and Vasubandhu the following statement:

"When the Bodhisattvas think of the Dharmakâya, how have they to picture it to themselves?

"Briefly stated, they will think of the Dharmakâya by picturing to themselves its seven characteristics, which constitute the faultless virtues and essential

¹ This is by no means the case, for some of the Mahâyāna sūtras are undoubtedly productions of much later writers than the immediate followers of the Buddha, though of course it is very likely that some of the most important Mahâyāna canonical books were compiled within a few hundred years after the Nirvana of the Master.

functions of the Kāya. (1) Think of the free, unrivaled, unimpeded activity of the Dharmakāya, which is manifested in all beings; (2) Think of the eternality of all perfect virtues in the Dharmakāya; (3) Think of its absolute freedom from all prejudice, intellectual and affective; (4) Think of those spontaneous activities that uninterruptedly emanate from the will of the Dharmakāya; (5) Think of the inexhaustible wealth, spiritual and physical, stored in the Body of the Dharma; (6) Think of its intellectual purity which has no stain of onesidedness; (7) Think of the earthly works achieved for the salvation of all beings by the Tathāgatas who are reflexes of the Dharmakāya "

As regards the activity of the Dharmakāya, which is shown in every Buddha's work of salvation, Asanga enumerates five forms of operation (1) It is shown in his power of removing evils which may befall us in the course of life, though the Buddha is unable to cure any physical defects which we may have, such as blindness, deafness, mental aberration, etc (2) It is shown in his irresistible spiritual domination over all evil-doers, who, base as they are, cannot help doing some good if they ever come in the presence of the Buddha. (3) It is shown in his power of destroying various unnatural and irrational methods of salvation which are practiced by followers of asceticism, hedonism, or Ishvaraism. (4) It is shown in his power of curing those diseased minds that believe in the reality, permanency, and indivisibility of the ego-soul, that is, in the pudgalavāda (5) It is shown in his inspiring

influence over those Bodhisattvas who have not yet attained to the stage of immovability as well as over those Śrāvakas whose faith and character are still in a state of vacillation.

The Freedom of the Dharmakāya.

These spiritual influences over all beings of the Dharmakāya through the enlightened mind of a Buddha, which we have seen above as stated by Asanga, are fraught with religious significance. According to the Buddhist view, those spiritual powers everlastingly emanating from the Body of Dharma have no trace of human elaboration or constrained effort, but they are a spontaneous overflow from its immanent necessity, or, as I take it, from its free will. The Dharmakāya does not make any conscious, struggling efforts to shower upon all sentient creatures its innumerable merits, benefits, and blessings. If there were in it any trace of elaboration, that would mean a struggle within itself of divers tendencies, one trying to gain ascendancy over another. And it is apparent that any struggle and its necessary ally, compulsion, are incompatible with our conception of the highest religious reality. Absolute spontaneity and perfect freedom is one of those necessary attributes which our religious consciousness cannot help ascribing to its object of reverence. Buddhists therefore repeatedly affirm that the activity of the Dharmakāya is perfectly free from all effort and coercion, external and internal. Its every act of creation or salvation

or love emanates from its own free will, unhampered by any struggling exertion which characterises the doings of mankind. This free will which is divine, standing in such a striking contrast with our own "free will" which is human and at best very much limited, is called by the Buddhists the Dharmakâya's "Purvapranidhânabala."¹

As the Dharmakâya works of its own accord it does not seek any recompense for its deed; and it is evident that every act of the Dharmakâya is always for the best welfare of its creatures, for they are its manifestations and it must know what they need. We do not have to ask for our "daily bread,"

¹ "Purvapranidhânabala" is frequently translated "the power of original (or primitive) prayer." Literally, *pūrva* means "former" or "original" or "primitive", and *pranidhāna*, "desire" or "vow" or "prayer"; and *bala*, "power." So far as literary rendering is concerned, "power of original prayer" seems to be the sense of the original Sanskrit. But when we speak of primitive prayers of the Dharmakâya or Tathâgata, how shall we understand it? Has prayer any sense in this connection? The Dharmakâya can by its own free will manifest in any form of existence and finish its work in whatever way it deems best. There is no need for it to utter any prayer in the agony of struggle to accomplish. There is in the universe no force whatever which is working against it so powerfully as to make it cry for help, and there cannot be any struggle or agony in the activity of the Dharmakâya. The term prayer therefore is altogether misleading and inaccurate and implicates us in a grave error which tends to contradict the general Buddhist conception of Dharmakâya. We must dispense with the term entirely in order to be in perfect harmony with the fundamental doctrine of Buddhism. This point will receive further consideration later.

nor have we to praise or eulogise its virtues to court its special grace, nor is there any necessity for us to offer prayer or supplication to the Dharmakāya. Consider the lilies of the field which neither toil nor spin,—and I might add,—which ask not for any favoritism from above; yet are they not arrayed even better than Solomon in all his glory? The Dharmakāya shines in its august magnificence everywhere there is life, nay, even where there is death. We are all living in the midst of it and yet, strange to say, as "the fish knows not the presence of water about itself," and also as "the mountaineers recognise not the mountains among which they hunt," even so we know not whence that power comes whose work is made manifest in us and whither it finally leadeth us. In spite of this profound ignorance, we really feel that we are here, and thereby we rest supremely contented. For we believe that all this is wrought through the mysterious and miraculous will of the Dharmakāya, who does all excellent works and seeks no recompense whatever.

The Will of the Dharmakāya.

Summarily speaking, the Dharmakāya assumes three essential aspects as reflected in our religious consciousness first, it is intelligence (*prajñā*); secondly, it is love (*karuṇā*); and thirdly, it is the will (*pranidhānabala*). We know that it is intelligence from the declaration that the Dharmakāya directs the course of the universe, not blindly but rationally; we know again that it is love because it embraces all

beings with fatherly tenderness;¹ and finally we must assume that it is a will, because the Dharmakâya has firmly set down its aim of activity in that good shall be the final goal of all evil in the universe. Without the will, love and intelligence will not be realised; without love, the will and intelligence will lose their impulse; without intelligence, love and the will will be irrational. In fact, the three are co-ordinates and constitute the oneness of the Dharmakâya; and by oneness I mean the absolute, and not the numerical, unity of all these three things in the being of the Dharmakâya, for intelligence and love and the will are differentiated as such only in our human, finite consciousness.

Some Buddhists may not agree entirely with the view here expounded. They may declare "We conform to your view when you say the Dharmakâya is intelligence and love, as this is expressly stated in the sūtras and çâstras; but we do not see how it could be made a will. Indeed, the Scriptures say that the Dharmakâya is in possession of the Pranidhânabala, but this bala or power is not necessarily the will, it is the power of prayers or intense vows. The Dharmakâya actually made solemn vows, and their spiritual energy abiding in the world of particulars works out its original plan and makes possible the universal salvation of all creatures."

It is quite true that the word pranidhânabala means

¹ "I am the father of all beings, and they are my children" (The *Apalamsaka*, the *Pundarika*, etc.)

literally "the power of original prayers." But this literary rendering totally ignores its inner significance without which the nature of the Dharmakāya would become unintelligible. We admit that the Dharmakāya knows no higher existence by which it is conditioned, nor has it any fragmentary, limited consciousness like that of human being, nor has it any intrinsic want by which it is necessitated to appeal to something other than itself. It is, therefore, utterly nonsensical to speak of its prayer, "original" or borrowed, as some Buddhists are inclined to think. On the other hand, we are perfectly justified in saying that whatever is done by the Dharmakāya is done by its own free will independent of all the determinations that might affect it from outside.

But I can presume the reason why they speak of the prayers of the Dharmakāya instead of its will. Here we have an instance of emotional outburst. The fervency of the intense religious sentiment not infrequently carries us beyond the limits of the intellect, landing us in a region full of mysteries and contradictions. It anthropomorphises everything beyond the proper measure of intellection and ascribes all earthly human feelings and passions to an object which the mind well-balanced demands to be above all the forms of human helplessness. The Buddhists, especially those of the Sukhāvati sect,¹ recognise the exist-

¹ To get more fully acquainted with the significance of the Sukhāvati doctrine, the reader is advised to look up the Sukhāvati sūtras in the *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol XLIX.

ence of an all-powerful will, all-embracing love, and all-knowing intelligence in the Dharmakâya, but they want to represent it more concretely and in a more humanly fashion before the mental vision of the less intellectual followers. The result thus is that the Dharmakâya in spite of its absoluteness made prayers to himself to emancipate all sentient beings from the sufferings of birth and death. But are not these self-addressed prayers of the Dharmakâya which sprang out of its inmost nature exactly what constitutes its will?

CHAPTER X.

THE DOCTRINE OF TRIKĀYA.

(BUDDHIST THEORY OF TRINITY.)

The Human and the Super-human Buddha.

ONE of the most remarkable differences between the Pāli and the Sanskrit, that is, between the Hinayāna and the Mahāyāna Buddhist literature, is in the manner of introducing the characters or persons who take principal parts in the narratives. In the former, sermons are delivered by the Buddha as a rule in such a natural and plain language as to make the reader feel the presence of the teacher, fatherly-hearted and philosophically serene; while in the latter generally we have a mysterious, transcendent figure, more celestial than human, surrounded and worshipped by beings of all kinds, human, celestial, and even demoniac, and this mystical central character performing some supernatural feats which might well be narrated by an intensely poetical mind.

In the Pāli scriptures, the texts as a rule open with the formula, "Thus it was heard by me" (*Evam me sutam*), then relate the events, if any, which induced the Buddha to deliver them, and finally lead the reader to the main subjects which are generally written in

lucid style. Their opening or introductory matter is very simple, and we do not notice anything extraordinary in its further development. But with the Mahâyâna texts it is quite different. Here we have, as soon as the curtain rises with the stereotyped formula, "Evam mayâ çrutam," a majestic prologue dramatically or rather grotesquely represented, which prepares the mind of the audience to the succeeding scenes, in which some of the boldest religio-philosophical proclamations are brought forth. The perusal of this introductory part alone will stupefy the reader by its rather monstrous grandeur, and he may without much ado declare that what follows must be extraordinary and may be even nonsensical.

The following is an illustration showing the typical manner of introducing the characters in the Mahâyâna texts. ¹

"Thus it was heard by me Buddha was once staying at Rājagriha, on the Gridhrakuta mountain. He was in the Hall of Ratnachandra in the Double Tower of Chandana. Ten years passed since his attainment of Buddhahood. He was surrounded by a hundred thousand Bhikṣus and Bodhisattvas and Mahāsattvas numbering sixty times as many as the sands of the Ganges. All of them were in possession of the greatest spiritual energy; they had paid homage to thousands of hundred mil-

¹ What follows is selected from a short sūtra called *The Mahāvaiṣṭya-Tatkālagarbhaka Sūtra*, translated into Chinese by Buddhābhadrā of the Eastern Tsin dynasty (A.D. 371-420). Nanjo, No 384.

lions of *niyutas*¹ of Buddhas; they were able to set rolling the never-sliding-back Wheel of Dharma; and whoever heard their names could establish themselves firmly in the Highest Perfect Knowledge. Their names were. . . . [Here about fifty Bodhisattvas are mentioned.]

"All these Bodhisattvas numbering sixty times as many as the sands of the Ganges coming from innumerable Buddha-countries were accompanied by numberless Devas, Nāgas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Aṣuras, Garudās, Kinnaras, and Mahoragas.² This great assembly all joined in revering, honoring, paying homage to the Bhagavat, the World-honored One.

"At this time the Bhagavat in the Double Tower of Chandana seated himself in the assigned seat, entered upon a samādhi, and displayed a marvelous phenomenon. There appeared innumerable lotus-flowers with thousand-fold petals and each flower as large as a carriage-wheel. They had perfectly beautiful color and fragrant odour, but their petals containing celestial beings in them were not yet unfolded. They all were raised now by themselves high up in the heavens and hung over the earth like a canopy of pearls. Each one of these lotus-flowers emitted innumerable rays of light and simultaneously grew in size with wonderful vitality. But through the divine power of Buddha they all of

¹ *Niyuta* is an exceedingly large number, but generally considered to be equal to one billion

² All these are unhuman forms of existence, including demons, dragon-kings, winged beasts, etc.

a sudden changed color and withered. All the celestial Buddhas sitting cross-legged within the flowers now came into full view, shone with innumerable hundred thousand-fold rays of light. At this moment the transcendent glory of the spot was beyond description " . . .

As is here thus clearly shown, the Buddha in the Mahâyâna scriptures is not an ordinary human being walking in a sensuous world; he is altogether dissimilar to that son of Suddhodana, who resigned the royal life, wandered in the wilderness, and after six years' profound meditation and penance discovered the Four-fold Noble Truth and the Twelve Chains of Dependence, and we cannot but think that the Mahâyâna Buddha is the fictitious creation of an intensely poetic mind. Let it be so. But the question which engages us now is, "How did the Buddhists come to relegate the human Buddha to oblivion, as it were, and assign a mysterious being in his place invested with all possible or sometimes impossible majesty and supernaturality?" This question, which marks the rise of Mahâyâna Buddhism, brings us to the doctrine of Trîkâya,—which in a sense corresponds to the Christian theory of trinity.

According to this doctrine, the Buddhists presume a triple existence of the Tathâgata, that is, the Tathâgata is conceived by them as manifesting himself in three different forms of existence: the Body of Transformation, the Body of Bliss, and the Body of Dharma. Though they are conceived as three, they are in fact all the manifestations of one Dharmakâya,—the Dharmakâya that revealed itself in the historical Çâkyamuni

Buddha as a Body of Transformation, and in the Mahâyâna Buddha as a Body of Bliss. However differently they may appear from the human point of view, they are nothing but the expression of one eternal truth, in which all things have their *raison d'être*.

An Historical View.

At present we are not in possession of any historical documents that will throw light on the question as to how early this doctrine of Trikāya or Buddhist trinity conception came to be firmly established among Northern Buddhists and found its way in an already-finished form as such into the Mahâyâna scriptures. As far as we know, it was Aṣvaghoṣa, the first Mahâyâna philosopher, who incorporated this conception in his *Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahâyâna* as early as the first century before Christ. This work, as the author declares, is a sort of synopsis of the Mahâyâna teachings, elucidating their principal features as taught by the Buddha in his various sūtras. It is not an original work which expounds the individual views of Aṣvaghoṣa concerning Buddhism. He wrote the book in a concise and comprehensive form, in order that the later generations who remote from the Buddha could not have the privilege of being inspired by his august presence, might peruse it with concentration of mind and synthetically grasp the whole significance of many lengthy and voluminous sūtras. Therefore, in the *Awakening of Faith*, we are supposed

not to find any Mahâyâna doctrines that were not already taught by the Buddha and incorporated in the sûtras. Everything Aṣvaghosa treats in his work must be considered merely a recapitulation of the doctrines which were not only formulated but firmly established as the Mahâyâna faith long before him. His is simply the work of a recorder. He carefully scanned all the Mahâyâna scriptures that had existed prior to his time and faithfully collected all the principal teachings of Mahâyânism here and there scatteringly told in them. His merit lies in compilation and systematisation.

This being the case, we must assume that all the doctrines that are found in Aṣvaghosa and distinct from those usually held to be Hinayânistic are the teachings elaborated by Buddhists from the time of Buddha's death down to the time of Aṣvaghosa. But as the latter apparently believes all these doctrines as Buddha's own and raises no doubt concerning their later origin, even if they were so, we must assume again that these doctrines were in a state of completion long before Aṣvaghosa's time. If our calculation is correct that he lived in the first century before Christ, the Mahâyâna faith must be said to have been formulated at least two hundred years prior to his age,—taking this presumably as the time that is required for the formulation and dogmatical establishment of a doctrine. This calculation places the development of the Mahâyâna faith during the first century* after the Buddha, and, we know, it was during this time that so many schools and divisions,—

among which we must also find the so-called "primitive" Buddhism of Ceylon, arose among the Buddhists,—each claiming to be the only authentic transmission of the Buddha's teaching. Did Mahāyānism come out of this turmoil of contention? Did it boldly raise itself from this chaos and claim to have solved all the questions and doubts that agitated the minds of Buddhists after the Nirvāṇa? For certain we do not know anything concerning the chronology of the development of Buddhist philosophy and dogmas in India, at least before Aśvaghoṣa; but, as far as our Chinese Buddhist literature records, we must conclude that this was most probably the case.

To give our readers a glimpse of the state of things that were taking place in those early days of Buddhism in India, I will quote some passages from Vasumitra's *Discourse on the Points of Controversy by the Different Schools of Buddhism*,—the work once referred to in the beginning of this book. The two principal schools that arose soon after the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha were, as is well known, the Elders and the Great Council, and though they were further divided into a number of smaller sections and their views became so complex and intermixed that some of the Elders shared similar views with the Great Council School and vice versa, yet we can fairly distinguish one from the other and describe the essential peculiarities of each school. These points of difference, generally speaking, are as follows, confining ourselves to their conceptions about the Buddha :

(1) According to the School of the Great Council, the Buddha's personality is transcendental (*lokottara*), and all the Tathâgatas are free from the defilements that might come from the material existence (*bhâvâçrava*).¹ For in the Buddha all evil passions hereditary and acquired were eternally uprooted, and his presence on earth was absolutely spotless. (*The Vibhâṣa*, CLXXIII.) Contending this view, the Elders held that the Buddha's personality was not free from Bhâvâçrava, though his mind was fully enlightened. His corporeal existence was the product of blind love veiled with ignorance and tangled with attachment. If this were not so, the Buddha's feature would not have awakened an impure affection in the heart of a maiden, an ill-will in the heart of a highwayman, stupidity in the mind of an ascetic, and arrogance in that of a haughty Brahman. These incidents which

¹ Âçrava literally means "oozing," or "flowing out," and the Chinese translators rendered it by *lotu*, dripping, or leaking. Roughly speaking, it is a general name for evils, principally material and sensuous. According to an Indian Buddhist scholar, Âçrava has threefold sense: (1) "keeping," for it retains all sentient beings in the whirlpool of birth and death, (2) "flowing," for it makes all sentient beings run in the stream of birth and death; (3) "leaking," or "oozing," for it lets such evils as avarice, anger, lust, etc., ooze out from the six sense-organs after the fashion of an ulcer, which lets out blood and filthy substance. The cause of Âçrava is a blind will, and its result is birth and death. Specifically, Bhâvâçrava is one of the three Âçravas, which are (1) *kâmâçrava*, (2) *vidyâçrava*, and (3) *bhâvâçrava*. The first is egotistic desires, the second is ignorance, and the third is the material existence which we have to suffer on account of our previous karma.

happened during the life of the Buddha evince that his corporeal presence was apt to agitate others' hearts, and to that extent it was contaminated by Bhāvāgrava.

(2) The Great Council School insists that every word uttered by a Tathāgata has a religious, spiritual meaning and purports to the edification of his fellow-beings; that his one utterance is variously interpreted by his audience each according to his own disposition, but all to his spiritual welfare; that every instruction given out by the Buddha is rational and perfect. Against these views the Elders think that the Buddha occasionally uttered things which had nothing to do with the enlightenment of others; that even with the Buddha something was out of his attainment, for instance, he could not make every one of his hearers perfectly understand his preachings; that though the Buddha never taught anything irrational and heretical, yet all his speeches were not perfect, he said some things which had no concern with rationality or orthodoxy

(3) The corporeal body (*rūpakāya*) of the Buddha has no limits (*koṭi*), his majestic power has no limits; every Buddha's life is unlimited; a Buddha knows no fatigue, knows not when to rest, always occupying himself with the enlightenment of all sentient beings and with the awakening in their hearts of pure faith. Against these tendencies of the Great Council School to deify the historical Buddha, the Elders generally insist on the humanity of Buddhahood. Though the

Elders agree with the Great Council in that the body assumed by the Buddha as the result of his untiring accumulation of good karma through eons of his successive existences possesses a wonderful power, spiritual and material, they do not conceive it to be beyond all limitations.

(4) The Great Council School says that with the Buddha sleep is not necessary and he has no dreams. The Elders admit that the Buddha never dreams, but denies that he does not need any sleep.

(5) As the Buddha is always in the state of a deep, exalted spiritual meditation, it is not necessary for him to think what to say when requested to answer certain questions. Though he might appear to the inquirers as if he thoroughly cogitates over the problems presented to him for solution, the Buddha's response is in fact immediate and without any efforts. The Elders, on the other hand, presume the Buddha's mental calculation as to how to express his ideas as best suited to the understanding of the audience. Indeed, he does not cogitate over the problem itself, for with him everything is transparent, but he thinks over the best method of presenting his ideas before his pupils. ¹

¹ Our thoughtful readers must have noticed here that the conceptions of the Buddha as entertained by the Mahāsanghika School (Great Council) closely resemble those of the Mahāyāna Buddhism. Though we are still unable to trace step by step the development of Mahāyānism in India, the hypothesis assumed by most of Japanese Buddhist scholars is that the Mahāsanghika was Mahāyānist in tendency.

Now to return to the doctrine of Dharmakāya and Trikāya. When we consider these controversies as above stated, it is apparent that among many other questions which arose soon after the demise of the Buddha Çākyamuni, there was one, which in all probability most agitated the minds of his disciples. I mean the question of the personality of Buddha. Was he merely a human being like ourselves? Then, how could he reach such a height of moral perfection? Or was he a divine being? But Buddha himself did not communicate anything to his disciples concerning his divinity, nor did he tell them to accept the Dharma on account of his divine personality, but solely for the sake of truth. But for all that how could the disciples ever eradicate from their hearts the feeling of sacred reverence for their teacher, which was so indelibly engraved there? Whenever they recalled the sermons, anecdotes, or gāthās of their master, the truth and spirit embodied in them and the author must have become so closely associated that they could not but ask themselves: "What in the Buddha caused him to perceive and declare these solemn profound truths? What was it that formed in him such a noble majestic character? What was there in the mind of Buddha that raised him to such a perfection of intellectual and religious life? How was it possible that, possessed of such exalted moral and spiritual virtues, Buddha too had to succumb to the law of birth and death that is the lot of common mortals? Some such questions must have been repeatedly asked before they

could answer them by the doctrines of Dharmakāya and Trikāya.

Who was the Buddha?

The evidence that these questions were constantly disturbing the minds of the disciples ever since the Master's entrance into Parinirvāṇa, is scatteringly revealed throughout the Buddhist texts both Southern and Northern. The regret of the immediate followers that they did not ask the Buddha to prolong his earthly life, while the Buddha told them that he could do so if he wished, and their lamentation over the remains of the Blessed One, "How soon the Light of the World has passed away!"¹ — these utterances may be considered the first drops foreboding the showers of doubt and speculation as to his personality.

According to the *Suvarṇa Prabhā Sūtra*,² a Bodhisattva, by the name of Ruciraketu, was greatly annoyed by the doubt why Çākyaṃuṇi Tathāgata had such a short life terminating only at eighty. He

¹ The *Mahāparinibbāna sūtra*

² There are three Chinese translations of this sūtra: the first, by Dharmarakṣa during the first two decades of the fifth century A. D.; the second, by Paramārtha of the Liang dynasty, who came to China A. D. 546 and died A. D. 569, and the third, by I-tsing of the Tang dynasty who came back from his Indian pilgrimage in the year 695 and translated this sūtra A. D. 703. The last is the only complete Chinese translation of the *Suvarṇa Prabhā*. A part of the original Sanskrit text recovered in Nepal was published by the Buddhist Text Society of India in 1898. Nanjo, Nos. 126, 127, 130.

taught the disciples that those who did not injure any living beings, and those who generously practised charity, in their former lives, could enjoy a considerably long life on earth; why then was the life of the Blessed One himself cut so short, who practised those virtues from time immemorial? The sūtra now records that this doubt was dispelled by the declaration of four Tathāgatas who mysteriously appeared to the sceptic and told him that "Every drop of water in the vast ocean can be counted, but the age of Çākyamuni none can measure. Crush the mount Sumeru into particles as fine as mustard seeds and we can count them, but the age of Çākyamuni none can measure..... the Buddha never entered into Parinirvana; the Good Dharma will never perish." He showed an earthly death merely for the benefits of sentient beings.".....

Here we have the conception of a spiritual Dharma-kāya germinating out of the corporeal death of Çākyamuni. ¹ Here we have the bridge that spans

* ¹ The notion that great men never die seems to be universal. Spiritually they would never perish, because the ideas that moved them and made them prominent in the history of humanity are born of truth. And in this sense every person who is possessed of worthy thoughts is immortal, while souls that are made of trumpery are certainly doomed to annihilation. But the masses are not satisfied with this kind of immortality. They must have something more tangible, more sensual, and more individual. The notion of bodily resurrection of Christ is a fine illustration of this truth. When the followers of Christ opened the master's grave, they did not find his body, so says legend, and they at once conceived the idea

the wide gap between the human Çākyaṃuni Buddha and the spiritual existence of the Dharmakāya. The Buddha did not die after he partook of the food offered by Chunda. His age was not eighty. His life did not pass to an airy nothingness when his cinerary urns were divided among kings and Brahmans. His virtues and merits which were accumulated throughout innumerable kalpas, could not come to naught so abruptly. What constituted the essence of his life—and that of ours too—could not perish with the vicissitudes of the corporeal existence. The Buddha as a particular individual being was certainly subject to transformation—so is every mortal, but his truth must abide forever. His Dharmakāya is above birth and death and even above Nirvāṇa; but his Body of Transformation comes out of the womb of Tathāgata as destined by karma and vanishes into it when the karma exhausts its force. The Buddha who is still seated at the summit of the Grīḍhrakuta, delivering to all beings the message of joy and bliss, and who among other precious teachings bequeathed to us

of resurrection, for they reasoned that such a great man as Jesus could not suffer the same fate that befalls common mortals only. The story of his corporeal resurrection now took wing and went wild, some heard him speak to them, some saw him break bread, and others even touched his wounds. What a grossly materialistic conception early Christians (and alas, even some of the twentieth century) cherished about resurrection and immortality! It is no wonder, therefore, that primitive Buddhists raised a serious question about the personality, of Buddha which culminated in the conception of the Sambhogakāya, Body of Bliss, by Mahāyānists.

such sūtras as the *Avatamsaka*, the *Pundarika*, etc., is no more nor less than an expression of the eternal spirit. Thus came the doctrine of Dharmakāya to be formulated by the Mahāyānists, and from this the transition to that of Trikāya was but a natural sequence. Because one without the other could not give an adequate solution of the problems above cited.

The Trikāya as Explained in the Suvarṇa Prabhā.

What then is the Trikāya or triple body of the Tathāgata? It is (1) Nirmāṇa Kāya, the Body of Transformation; (2) Sambhoga Kāya, the Body of Bliss; and (3) Dharma Kāya, the Body of Dharma. If we draw a parallelism between the Buddhist and the Christian trinity, the Body of Transformation may be considered to correspond to Christ in the flesh, the Body of Bliss either to Christ in glory or to Holy Ghost, and Dharmakāya to Godhead.

Let us again quote from the *Suvarṇa Prabhā*, in which (I-tsing's translation, chap. III.) we find the following statements concerning the doctrine of Trikāya.

"The Tathāgata, when he was yet at the stage of discipline, practised divers deeds of morality for the sake of sentient beings. The practise finally attained perfection, reached maturity, and by virtue of its merits he acquired a wonderful spiritual power. The power enabled him to respond to the thoughts, deeds, and livings of sentient beings. He thoroughly understood them and never missed the right opportunity

[to respond to their needs]. He revealed himself in the right place and in the right moment; he acted rightly, assuming various bodily forms [in response to the needs of mortal souls]. These bodily forms are called the *Nirmānakāya* of the Tathāgata.

"But when the Tathāgatas, in order to make the Bodhisattvas thoroughly conversant with the Dharma, to instruct them in the highest reality, to let them understand that birth-and-death (*samsāra*) and Nirvāna are of one taste, to destroy the thoughts of the ego, individuality, and the fear [of transmigration], and to promote happiness, to lay foundation for innumerable Buddha-dharmas, to be truly in accord with Suchness, the knowledge of Suchness, and the Spontaneous Will, manifest themselves to the Bodhisattvas in a form which is perfect with the thirty-two major and eighty minor features of excellence and shining with the halo around the head and the back, the Tathāgatas are said to have assumed the Body of Bliss or *Sambhogakāya*.¹

"When all possible obstacles arising from sins [material, intellectual, and emotional] are perfectly removed, and when all possible good dharmas are preserved, there would remain nothing but Suchness and the knowledge of Suchness,—this is the *Dharmakāya*.

"The first two forms of the Tathāgata are provisional [and temporal] existences; but the last one is a reality, wherein the former two find the reason of

¹ Compare this to the transfigured Christ.

their existence. Why? Because when deprived of the Dharma of Suchness and of knowledge of non-particularity, no Buddha-dharma can ever exist; because it is Suchness and Knowledge of Suchness that absorbs within itself all possible forms of Buddha-wisdom and renders possible a complete extinction of all passions and sins [arising from particularity]."

According to the above, the Dharmakāya which is tantamount to Suchness or Knowledge of Suchness is absolute; but like the moon whose image is reflected in a drop of water as well as in the boundless expanse of the waves, the Dharmakāya assumes on itself all possible aspects from the grossest material form to the subtlest spiritual existence. When it responds to the needs of the Bodhisattvas whose spiritual life is on a much higher plane than that of ordinary mortals, it takes on itself the Body of Bliss or Sambhogakāya. This Body is a supernatural existence, and almost all the Buddhas in the Mahāyāna scriptures belong to this class of being. Aṣvaghoṣa (p. 101) says: "The Body has infinite forms. The form has infinite attributes. The attribute has infinite excellences. And the accompanying fruition, that is, the region where they are destined to be born [by their previous karma], also has infinite merits and ornamentations. Manifesting itself everywhere, the Body of Bliss is infinite, boundless, limitless, unintermittent [in its activity] which comes directly from the Mind [Dharmakāya]."

But the Buddhas revealed to the eyes of common

mortals are not of this kind. They are common mortals themselves, and the earthly Çâkyamuni who came out of the womb of Mâyâdevî and passed away under the sâla trees at the age of eighty years was one of them. He was essentially a manifestation of the Dharmakâya, and as such we ordinary people also partake something of him. But the masses, unless favored by good karma accumulated in the past, are generally under the spell of ignorance. They do not see the glory of Dharmakâya in its perfect purity shining in the lilies of the field and sung by the fowls of the air. They are blindly groping in the dark wilderness, they are vainly seeking, they are wildly knocking. To the needs of these people the Dharmakâya responds by assuming an earthly form as a human Buddha.

Revelation in All Stages of Culture.

En passant, let us remark that it is in this sense that Christ is conceived by Buddhists also as a manifestation of the Dharmakâya in a human form. He is a Buddha and as such not essentially different from Çâkyamuni. The Dharmakâya revealed itself as Çâkyamuni to the Indian mind, because that was in harmony with its needs. The Dharmakâya appeared in the person of Christ on the Semitic stage, because it suited their taste best in this way. The doctrine of Trikâya, however, goes even further and declares that demons, animal gods, ancestor-worship, nature-worship, and what not, are all due to the activity and revelation of the Dharmakâya responding to the spiritual needs of barbarous

and half-cultured people. The Buddhists think that the Dharmakāya never does things that are against the spiritual welfare of its creatures, and that whatever is done by it is for their best interests at that moment of revelation, no matter how they comprehend the nature of the Dharmakāya. The Great Lord of Dharma never throws a pearl before the swine, for he knows the animal's needs are for things more substantial. He does not reveal himself in an exalted spiritual form to the people whose hearts are not yet capable of grasping anything beyond the grossly material. As they understand animal gods better than a metaphysical or highly abstracted being, let them have them and derive all possible blessings and benefits through their worshiping. But as soon as they become dissatisfied with the animal or human-fashioned gods, there must not be a moment's hesitation to let them have exactly what their enlightened understanding can comprehend. ¹

¹ Cf. I Cor. xiii, 11. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things." This point of our ever-ascending spiritual progress is well illustrated in the *Saddharma-pundarika Sūtra*. See Chapters II, III, IV, V, and XI. The following passage quoted from chap. II, p. 49 (Kern's translation) will give a tolerably adequate view concerning diversity of means and unity of purpose as here expounded: "Those highest of men have, all of them, revealed most holy laws by means of illustrations, reasons and arguments, with many hundred proofs of skillfulness (*upāyakaṇṭhāḥ*) And all of them have manifested but one vehicle and introduced but one on earth; by one vehicle have they led to full ripeness inconceivably many thousands of knots of beings." As was

They are thus all the while being led, though unconsciously on their part, to the higher and higher region of mystery, till they come fully to grasp the true and real meaning of the Dharmakāya in its absolute purity, or, to use Christian terminology, till "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

The Mahāyānists now argue that the reason why Çākya-muni entered into Parinirvana when his worldly career was thought by him to be over is that by this his resignation to the law of birth and death, he wished to exemplify in him the impermanency of worldly life and the folly of clinging to it as final reality. As for his Dharmakāya, it has an eternal life, it was never born, and it would never perish, and when called by the spiritual needs of the Bodhisattvas, it will cast off the garb of absoluteness and preach in the form of a Sambhogakāya "never-ceasing sermons which run like a stream for ever and aye." It will be evident from this that Buddhists are ready to consider all religious or moral leaders of mankind, whatever their nationality, as the Body of Transformation of the Dharmakāya. Translated into Christian thoughts, God reveals himself in every being that is worthy of him. He reveals himself not only at a certain

elsewhere noted. this doctrine is sometimes known as the theory of Upāya. Upāya is very difficult term to translate into English; it literally means "way," "method," or "strategy." For fuller interpretation see p. 298, footnote.

period in history, but everywhere and all the time. His glory is perceived throughout all the stages of human culture. This manifestation, from the very nature of God, cannot be intermittent and sporadic as is imagined by some "orthodox Christians." The following from St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians (Chap. xiii), when read in this connection, sounds almost like a Buddhist philosopher's utterance: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

in its commentary, the author Asanga and the commentator Vasubandhu endeavor to prove why the Body of Bliss cannot be the *raison d'être* of the Dharmakāya, instead of vice versa; and in this connection they argue that (1) the Body of Bliss consists of the five Skandhas, that is, of material form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), ideas (*samjñā*), deeds (*sanskāra*), and consciousness (*viññāna*); (2) it is subject to particularisation; (3) it reveals different virtues and characters according to the desires of Bodhisattvas; (4) even to the same individual it appears differently at different times; (5) when it manifests itself simultaneously before an assemblage of Bodhisattvas of divers characters and qualifications, it at once assumes divers forms, in order to satisfy their infinitely diversified inclinations; (6) it is a creation of the Ālayaviññāna, All-conserving Mind.

These six peculiarities of the Body of Bliss as enumerated by Asanga and Vasubandhu make it indeed entirely dependent on the Dharmakāya, but they do not place us in any better position to penetrate into the deep mystery of its nature. Its supernatural incomprehensibility remains the same forever. In a certain sense, however, the Body of Bliss may be considered to be corresponding to the Christian idea of an angel. Supernaturalness and luminosity are the two characters possessed by both, but angels are merely messengers of God communicating the latter's will to human beings. When they reveal themselves to a specially favored person, it is not of their own

account. When they speak to him at all, it is by the name¹ of the being who sent them. They do not represent him, they do not act his own will by themselves. On the contrary, the Body of Bliss is the master of its own. It is an expression of the Dharma-kāya. It instructs and benefits all the creatures who come to it. It acts according to its own will and judgment. In these respects the Body of Bliss is altogether different from the Christian conception of angels. But will it be more appropriately compared to Christ in glory?

Let us make another quotation from later authorities than Asanga and his brother Vasubandhu, and let us see more convincingly what complicated notions are involved in the idea of the Body of Bliss. According to the commentators on Vasubandhu's *Vijñānamātra Śāstra* (a treatise on the Yoga philosophy),¹ the Body of Bliss has two distinct aspects: (1) The body obtained by the Tathāgata for his self-enjoyment, by dint of his religious discipline through eons, (2) The body which the Tathāgata manifests to the

¹ This is one of the most important philosophical works of the Yogacāra school Vasubandhu wrote the text (Nanjo, No. 1215) which consists only of thirty verses, but there appeared many commentators after the death of the author, who naturally entertained widely different views among themselves on the subject-matter, as it is too tersely treated in the text. Hsüen Tsang made selections out of the ten noted Hindu exegetists in A. D. 659 and translated them into the Chinese language. The compilation consists of ten fascicles and is known as *Discourse on the Ideality of the Universe* (a free rendering of the Chinese title *Chang wei shi lun*, Nanjo, No. 1197)

Bodhisattvas in Pure Land (*sukhâvati*). This last body is in possession of wonderful spiritual powers, reveals the Wheel of Dharma, resolves all the religious doubts raised by the Bodhisattvas, and lets them enjoy the bliss of the Mahâyâna Dharma.

A Mere Subjective Existence.

Judging from all these characterisations, the most plausible conclusion that suggests itself to modern sceptical minds is that the Sambhogakâya must be a mere creation of an intelligent, finite mind, which is intently bent on reaching the highest reality, but, not being able, on account of its limitations, to grasp the object in its absoluteness, the finite mind fabricates all its ideals after its own fashion into a spiritual-material being, which is logically a contradiction, but religiously an object deserving veneration and worship. And this being is no more than the Body of Bliss.¹ It lies half way between the pure being of Dharmakâya and the earthly form of Nirmânakâya, the Body of Transformation. It does not belong to either, but partakes something of both. It is in a sense spiritual

¹ May I venture to say that the conception of God as entertained by most Christians is a Body of Bliss rather than the Dharmakâya itself? In some respects their God is quite spiritual, but in others he is thought of as a concrete material being like ourselves. It seems to me that the human soul is ever struggling to free itself from this paradox, though without any apparent success, while the masses are not so intellectual and reflective enough as to become aware of this eternal contradiction which is too deeply buried in their minds.

like the Dharmakāya, and yet it cannot go beyond material limitations, for it has a form, definite and determinate. When the human soul is thirsty after a pure being or an absolute which cannot be comprehended in a palpable form, it creates a hybrid, an imitation, or a reflection, and tries to be satisfied with it, just as a little girl has her innate and not yet fully developed maternity satisfied by tenderly embracing and nursing the doll, an inanimate imitation of a real living baby. And the Mahāyānists seem to have made most of this childish humanness. They produced as many sūtras as their spiritual yearnings demanded, quite regardless of historical facts, and made the Body of Bliss of the Tathāgata the author of all these works. For if the Dharmakāya of the Tathāgata never entered into Parinirvāna, why then could he not deliver sermons and cite gāthās as often as beings of intelligence (Bodhisattvas) felt their needs? The *Suvarṇa Prabhā* (fas. 2, chap 3) again echoes this sentiment as follows

“To illustrate by analogy, the sun or the moon does not make any conscious discrimination, nor does the water-mirror, nor the light [conceived separate from the body from which it emanates] But when all these three are brought together, there is produced an image [of the sun or the moon in the water]. So it is with Suchness and Knowledge of Suchness. It is not possessed of any particular consciousness, but by virtue of the Spontaneous Will [inherent in the nature of Suchness, or what is the same thing, in the

Dharmakāya], the Body of Transformation or of Bliss [as a shadow of the Dharmakāya] reveals itself in response to the spiritual needs of sentient beings.

“And, again, as the water-mirror boundlessly expanding reflects in all different ways the images of ākāśa (void space) through the medium of light, while space itself is void of all particular marks, so the Dharmakāya reflects its images severally in the receiving minds of believers, and this by virtue of Spontaneous Will. The Will creates the Body of Transformation as well as the Body of Bliss in all their possible aspects, while the original, the Dharmakāya, does not suffer one whit a change on this account.”

According to this, it is evident that whenever our spiritual needs become sufficiently intense there is a response from the Dharmakāya, and that this response is not always uniform as the recipient minds show different degrees of development, intellectually and spiritually. If we call this communion between sentient souls and the Dharmakāya an inspiration, all the phenomena that flow out of fulness of heart and reflect purity of soul should be called “works of inspiration”; and in this sense the Mahāyānists consider their scriptures as emanating directly from the fountainhead of the Dharmakāya.

Attitude of Modern Mahāyānists.

Modern Mahāyānists in full accordance with this interpretation of the Doctrine of Trikāya do not place,

much importance on the objective aspects of the Body of Bliss (*Sambhogakāya*). They consider them at best the fictitious products of an imaginative mind; they never tarry a moment to think that all these mysterious Tathāgatas or Bodhisattvas who are sometimes too extravagantly and generally too tediously described in the Mahāyāna texts are objective realities, that the Sukhāvātī or Pure Lands¹ are decorated with such worldly stuff as gold, silver, emerald, cat's eye, pearl, and other precious stones, that pious Buddhists would be transferred after their death to these ostentatiously ornamented heavens, be seated on the pedestals of lotus-flowers, surrounded by innumerable Bodhisattvas and Buddhas, and would enjoy all the spiritual enjoyments that human mind can conceive. On the contrary, modern Buddhists look with disdain on these egotistic materialistic conceptions of religious life. For, to a fully enlightened soul, of what use could those worldly trea-

¹ The reader must not think that there is but one Pure Land which is elaborately described in the *Sukhāvatī Vyūha Sūtra* as the abode of the Tathāgata Amitābha, situated innumerable leagues away in the West. On the contrary, the Mahāyāna texts admit the existence of as innumerable pure lands as there are Tathāgatas and Bodhisattvas, and every single one of these holy regions has no boundary and is co-existent with the universe, and, therefore, their spheres necessarily intercrossing and overlapping one another. It would look to every intelligent mind that those innumerable Buddha-countries existing in such a mysterious and incomprehensible manner cannot be anything else than our own subjective creation.

sures be? What happiness, earthly or heavenly, does such a soul dream of, outside the bliss of embracing the will of the Dharmakāya as his own?

Recapitulation.

To sum up, the Buddha in the Pāli scriptures was a human being, though occasionally he is credited to have achieved things supernatural and superhuman. His historical career began with the abandonment of a royal life, then the wandering in the wilderness, and a long earnest meditation on the great problems of birth-and-death, and his final enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, then his fifty years' religious peregrination along the valleys of the Ganges, and the establishment of a religious system known as Buddhism, and finally his eternal entrance into the "Parinirvāṇa that leaves nothing behind" (*anupadhiṣṣanirvāṇa*). And as far as plain historical facts are concerned, these seem to exhaust the life of Çākya-muni on earth. But the deep reverence which was felt by his disciples could not be satisfied with this prosaic humanness of their master and made him something more than a mortal soul. So even the Pāli tradition gives him a supramundane life besides the earthly one. He is supposed to have been a Bodhisattva in the Tuṣita heaven before his entrance into the womb of Māyādevī. The honor of Bodhisattvahood was acceded to him on account of his deeds of self-sacrifice which were praised throughout his innumerable past incarnations. While he was walk-

ing among us in the flesh, he was glorified with the thirty-two major and eighty minor excellent characteristics of a great man.¹ But he was not the first Buddha that walked on earth to teach the Dharma, for there were already seven Buddhas before him, nor was he the last one that would appear among us, for

¹ For a description of these marks see the *Dharmasangraha*, pp. 53 ff. A process of mystifying or deifying the person of Buddha seems to have been going on immediately after the death of the Master, and the Mahâyânistic conception of Nirmānakāya and Sambhogakāya is merely the consummation of this process. Southern Buddhists who are sometimes supposed to represent a more "primitive" form of Buddhism describe just as much as Mahâyānism the thirty-two major and eighty minor excellent physical marks of a great man as having been possessed by Çākyamuni, (for instance, see the *Milindapañha*, S.B.E. Vol. XXXV. p. 116). But any person with common sense will at once see the absurdity of representing any human being with those physical peculiarities. And this seems to have inspired more rational Mahâyānists to abandon the traditional way of portraying the human Buddha with those mysterious signs. They transferred them through the doctrine of Trikāya to the characterisation of the Sambhogakāya Buddha, that is, to the Buddha enjoying in a celestial abode the fruit of his virtuous earthly life. The Buddha who walked in the flesh as the son of King Suddhodana was, however, no more than an ordinary human being like ourselves, because he appeared to us in a form of Nirmānakāya, i.e. as a Body of Transformation, devoid of any such physical peculiarities known as thirty-two or eighty laksanas. Southern Buddhists, so called, seem, however, to have overlooked the ridiculousness of attributing these fantastic signs to the human Buddha; and this fact explains that as soon as the memory of the personal disciples of Buddha about his person vanished among the later followers, intense speculation and resourceful imagination were constantly exercised until the divers schools settled the question each in its own way.

a Bodhisattva by the name of Maitreya is now in heaven and making preparations for the attainment of Buddhahood in time to come. But here stopped the Pali writers, they did not venture to make any further speculation on the nature of Buddhahood. Their religious yearnings did not spur them to a higher flight of the imagination. They recited simple sūtras or gāthās, observed the çilas (moral precepts) as strictly and literally as they could, and thought the spirit of their Master still alive in these instructions; — let alone the personality of the Tathâgata.

But there was at the same time another group of the disciples of the Buddha, whose religious and intellectual inclinations were not of the same type as their fellow-believers; and on that account a simple faith in the Buddha as present in his teachings did not quite satisfy them. They perhaps reasoned in this fashion: "If there were seven Buddhas before the advent of the Great Muni of Çakya and there would be one more who is to come, where, let us ask, did they derive their authority and knowledge to preach? How is it that there cannot be any more Buddhas, that they do not come to us much oftener? If they were human beings like ourselves, why not we ourselves be Buddhas?" These questions, when logically carried out, naturally led them to the theory of Dharmakâya, that all the past Buddhas, and those to come, and even we ordinary mortals made of clay and doomed to die soon, owe the *raison d'être* of their existence to the Dharmakâya, which alone is immortal in us

as well as in Buddhas. The first religious effort we have to make is, therefore, to recognise this archetype of all Buddhas and all beings. But the Dharmakāya as such is too abstract for the average mind to become the object of its religious consciousness; so they personified or rather materialised it. In other words, they idealised Çākyaṃuni, endowed him not only with the physical signs (*lakṣas*) of greatness as in the Pālī scriptures, but with those of celestial transfiguration, and called him a Body of Bliss of the Tathāgata; while the historical human Buddha was called a Body of Transformation and all sentient beings Bodhisattvas, that is, beings of intelligence destined to become Buddhas.

This idealised Buddha, or, what is the same thing, a personified Dharmakāya, according to the Mahāyāna Buddhists, not only revealed himself in the particular person of Siddhārtha Gautama in Central Asia a few thousand years ago, but is revealing himself in all times and all places. There is no specially favored spot on the earth where only the Buddha makes his appearance; from the zenith of Akaniṣṭha heaven down to the bottom of Nāraka, he is manifesting uninterruptedly and unintermittently and is working out his ideas, of which, however, our limited understanding is unable to have an adequate knowledge. The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (Buddhabhadra's translation, fas. 45, chap. 34) describes how the Buddha works out his scheme of salvation in all possible ways. (See also the *Saddharma*

pundarikā, Kern's translation, chap. 2, p. 30 et seq., and also pp. 413-411.)

"In this wise the Buddha teaches and delivers all sentient beings through his religious teachings whose number is innumerable as atoms. He may reveal sometimes in the world of devas, sometimes in that of Nāgas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnaras, Mahoragas, etc., sometimes in the world of Brahmins, sometimes in the world of human beings, sometimes in the palace of Yāmarāja (king of death), sometimes in the underworld of damned spirits, ghosts, and beasts. His all-swaying compassion, intelligence, and will would not rest until all beings had been brought under his shelter through all possible means of salvation. He may achieve his work of redemption sometimes by means of his name, sometimes by means of memory, sometimes of voice, sometimes of perfect illumination, sometimes of the net of illumination. Whenever and wherever conditions are ripe for his appearance, he would never fail to present himself before sentient beings and also to manifest views of grandeur and splendor.

"The Buddha does not depart from his own region, he does not depart from his seat in the tower; yet he reveals himself in all the ten quarters of the globe. He would sometimes emanate from his own body the clouds of Nirmānakāyas, or sometimes reveal himself in an undivided personality, and itinerating in all quarters would teach and deliver all sentient beings. He may assume sometimes the form of a Ārāvaka, sometimes that of a Brahmadeva, sometimes that of

an ascetic, sometimes that of a good physician, sometimes that of a tradesman, sometimes that of a Bhikṣu [or honest worker], sometimes that of an artist, sometimes that of a deva. Again, he may reveal himself sometimes in all the forms of art and industry, sometimes in all the places of congregation, such as towns, cities, villages, etc. And whatever his subjects for salvation may be, and whatever his surroundings, he will accommodate himself to all possible conditions and achieve his work of enlightenment and salvation" ¹

The practical sequence of this doctrine of Trikāya is apparent; it has ever more broadened the spirit of tolerance in Buddhists. As the Dharmakāya universally responds to the spiritual needs of all sentient beings in all times and in all places and at any stage of their spiritual development, Buddhists consider all spiritual leaders, whatever their nationality and personality, as the expressions of the one omnipotent Dharmakāya. And as the Dharmakāya always manifests itself for the best interests of sentient creatures, even those doctrines and their authors that are apparently against the teachings of Buddhism are tolerated through the conviction that they are all moving according to the Spontaneous Will that pervades everywhere and works all the time. Though, superficially, they may appear as evils, their central and final aim is goodness and harmony which are destined by the Will of the Dharmakāya to overcome this world of tribulations and

¹ Cf. I Cor. xi. 17 et seq.

contradictions. The general intellectual tendency of Buddhism has done a great deal towards cultivating a tolerant spirit in its believers, and we must say that the doctrine of Trinity which appears sometimes too radical in its pantheistic spirit has contributed much to this cause.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BODHISATTVA.

NEXT to the conception of Buddha, what is important in Mahâyâna Buddhism is that of Bodhisattva (intelligence-being) and of that which constitutes its essence, Bodhicitta, intelligence heart. As stated above, the followers of Mahâyânism do not call themselves Çrâvakas or Pratyekabuddhas or Arhats as do those of Hīnayânism; but they distinguish themselves by the title of Bodhisattva. What this means will be the subject-matter of this chapter.

Let us begin with a quotation from the *Saddharma-pundarika Sûtra*, in which a well-defined distinction between the Çrâvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas and the Bodhisattvas is given.¹

The Three Yânas.

"Now, Çariputra, the beings who have become wise, have faith in the Tathâgata, the father of the world, and consequently apply themselves to his commandments

"Amongst them there are some who, wishing to follow the dictate of an authoritative voice, apply themselves to the commandment of the Tathâgata to

¹ Kern's English translation (*S.B.E.* Vol. XXI), Chap. III, p. 80.

acquire the knowledge of the Four Great Truths, for the sake of their own complete Nirvana. These, one may say, to be those who, seeking the vehicle of the *Çrāvaka*, fly from the triple world

"Other beings desirous of the unconditioned knowledge, of self-restraint and tranquillity, apply themselves to the commandment of the *Tathāgata* to learn to understand the Twelve Chains of Dependence, for the sake of their own complete Nirvana. These, one may say, to be those who, seeking the vehicle of the *Pratyekabuddha*, fly from the triple world

"Other beings again desirous of omniscience, *Buddha*-knowledge, absolute knowledge, unconditioned knowledge; apply themselves to the commandment of the *Tathāgata* and to learn to understand the knowledge, powers, and conviction of the *Tathāgata*, for the sake of the common weal and happiness, out of compassion to the world, for the benefit, weal and happiness of the world at large, of both gods and men, for the sake of the complete Nirvana of all beings. These, one may say, to be those who seeking the Great Vehicle (*Mahāyāna*) fly from the triple world. Therefore, they are called *Bodhisattva-mahāsattvas*."

This characterisation of the *Bodhisattvas* as distinct from the *Çrāvakas* and *Pratyekabuddhas* constitutes one of the most significant features of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Here the *Bodhisattva* does not exert himself in religious discipline for the sake of his own weal, but for the sake of the spiritual benefit of all his fellow-creatures. If he will, he could,

like the Ārāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, enter into eternal Nirvana that never slides back; he could enjoy the celestial bliss of undisturbed tranquillity in which all our worldly tribulations are forever buried, he could seclude himself from the hurly-burly of the world, and, sitting cross-legged in a lonely cave, quietly contemplate on the evanescence of human interests and the frivolity of earthly affairs, and then self-contentedly await the time of final absorption into the absolute All, as streams and rivers finally run into one great ocean and become of one taste. But, in spite of all these self-sufficient blessings, the Bodhisattva would not seek his own ease, but he would mingle himself in the turmoil of worldly life and devote all his energy to the salvation of the masses of people, who, on account of their ignorance and infatuation, are forever transmigrating in the triple world, without making any progress towards the final goal of humanity.

Along this Bodhisattvaic devotion, however, there was another current of religious thought and practice running among the followers of Buddha. By this I mean the attitude of the Ārāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas. Both of them sought peace of mind in asceticism and cold philosophical speculation. Both of them were intently inclined to gain Nirvana which may be likened unto an extinguished fire. It was not theirs to think of the common weal of all beings, and, therefore, when they attained their own redemption from earthly sins and passions, their religious discipline was completed, and no further attempt was

made by them to extend the bliss of their personal enlightenment to their fellow-creatures. ¹ They recoiled from mingling themselves among vulgar people lest their holy life should get contaminated. They did not have confidence enough in their own power to help the masses to break the iron yoke of ignorance and misery. Moreover, everybody was supposed to exert himself for his own emancipation, however unbearable his pain was for others could not do anything to alleviate it. Sympathy was of no avail; because the reward of his own karma good or evil could be suffered by himself alone, nor could it be avoidable even by the doer himself. Things done were done

¹ It should be noted here that the idea of universal salvation was lacking altogether in the followers of Hinayānism. But what distinguished it so markedly from Mahāyānism is that the former did not extend the idea wide enough, but confined it to Buddhahood only. Buddha attained omniscience in order that he might deliver the world, but we, ordinary mortals, are too ignorant and too helpless to aspire for Buddhahood; let us be contented with paying homage to Buddha and faithfully observing his precepts as laid down by him for our spiritual edification. Our knowledge and energy are too limited to cope with such a gigantic task as to achieve a universal salvation of mankind; let a Buddha or Bodhisattva attempt it while we may rest with a profound confidence in him and in his work. Thoughts somewhat like these must have been going about in the minds of the Hinayānists, when their Mahāyāna brethren were making bold to strive after Buddhahood themselves. The difference between the two schools of Buddhism, when most concisely expressed, is this: While one has a most submissive confidence in the Buddha, the other endeavors to follow his example by placing himself in his position. The following quotation ("the Story of Sumedha,"

once for all, and their karma made an indelible mark on the pages of his destiny. Even Buddha who was supposed to have attained that exalted position by practising innumerable pious deeds in all his former lives, could not escape the fruit of evil karma which was quite unwittingly committed by him. This iron arm of karma seizes everybody in person and does not allow any substitute whatever. Those who wish to give a halt to the working of karma could do so only by applying a counter-force to it, and this with no other hand than his own. The Mahāyānist conception of Bodhisattvahood may be considered an effort somewhat to mitigate this ruthless mechanical rigidity of the law of karma.

a Jātaka tale, from Warren's *Buddhism*, p 14) in which Sumedha, one of the Buddha's former incarnations, expresses his resolve to be a Buddha, may just as well be considered as that of a Mahāyānist himself, while the Hinayānists would not dare to make this wish their own:

"Or why should I, valorous man,
The ocean seek to cross alone?
Omniscience first will I achieve,
And men and gods convey across

"Since now I make this earnest wish,
In presence of this Best of Men,
Omniscience sometime I'll achieve,
And multitude convey across

"I'll rebirth' circling stream arrest,
Destroy existence's three modes,
I'll climb the sides of Doctrine's ship,
And men and gods convey across."

Strict Individualism.

The Buddhism of the *Çrāvakas* and the *Pratyekabuddhas* is the most unscrupulous application to our ethico-religious life of the individualistic theory of *karma*. *All things done are done by oneself; all things left undone are left undone by oneself.* They would say: "Your salvation is exclusively your own business, and whatever sympathy I may have is of no avail. All that I can do toward helping you is to let you see intellectually the way to emancipation. If you do not follow it, you have but to suffer the fruition of your folly. I am helpless with all my enlightenment, even with my Nirvana, to emancipate you from the misery of perpetual metempsychosis." But with the Buddhism of the *Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas* the case is entirely different. It is all-sympathy, it is all-compassion, it is all-love. A *Bodhisattva* would not seclude himself into the absolute tranquillity of Nirvana, simply because he wishes to emancipate his fellow-creatures also from the bondage of ignorance and infatuation. Whatever rewards he may get for his self-enjoyment as the *karma* of his virtuous deeds, he would turn them over (*parivarta*) towards the uplifting of the suffering masses. And this self-sacrifice, this unselfish devotion to the welfare of his fellow-beings constitutes the essence of *Bodhisattvahood*. The ideal *Bodhisattva*, therefore, is thought to be no more than an incarnation of *Intelligence* and *Love*, of *Prajñā* and *Karunā*.

The irrefragability of *karma* seems to be satisfactory

from the intellectual and individualistic standpoint, for the intellect demands a thorough application of logic, and individualism does not allow the transferring of responsibility from one person to another. From this viewpoint, therefore, a rigorous enforcement as demanded by Hinayânism of the principle of self-emancipation does not show any logical fault; divine grace must be suspended as the curse of karma produced by ignorance tenaciously clings to our soul. But when viewed from the religious side of the question, this inflexibility of karma is more than poor mortals can endure. They want something more elastic and pliable that yields to the supplication of the feeling. When individuals are considered nothing but isolated, disconnected atoms, between which there is no unifying bond which is the feeling, they are too weak to resist and overcome the ever-threatening force of evil, whose reality as long as a world of particulars exists cannot be contradicted. This religious necessity felt in our inmost consciousness may explain the reason why Mahâyâna Buddhism proposed the doctrine of parivarta (turning over) founded on the oneness of Dharmakâya.

The Doctrine of Parivarta.

The doctrine of turning over (*parivarta*) of one's own merits to others is a great departure from that which seems to have been the teaching of "primitive Buddhism." In fact, it is more than a departure, it

is even in opposition to the latter in some measure. Because while individualism is a predominant feature in the religious practice of the Çrāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas, universalism or supra-individualism, if I am allowed to use these terms, is the principle advocated by the Bodhisattvas. The latter believe that all beings, being a manifestation of the Dharmakāya, are in their essence of one nature; that individual existences are real so far as subjective ignorance is concerned; and that virtues and merits issuing directly from the Dharmakāya which is intelligence and love, cannot fail to produce universal benefit and to effect final emancipation of all beings. Thus, the religion of the Bodhisattvas proposes to achieve what was thought impossible by the Çrāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas, that is, the turning over of one's own merits to the service of others.

It is in this spirit that the Bodhisattvas conceive the seriousness of the significance of life; it is in this spirit that, pondering over the reason of their existence on earth, they come to the following view of life:

"All ignorant beings are daily and nightly performing evil deeds in innumerable ways; and, on this account, their suffering beggars description. They do not recognise the Tathāgata, do not listen to his teachings, do not pay homage to the congregation of holy men. And this evil karma will surely bring them a heavy crop of misery. This reflection fills the heart of a Bodhisattva with gloomy feelings," which in turn

gives rise to the immovable resolution, that he himself will carry all the burdens for ignorant beings and help them to reach the final goal of Nirvana. Inestimably heavy as these burdens are, he will not swerve nor yield under their weight. He will not rest until all ignorant beings are freed from the entangling meshes of desire and sin, until they are uplifted above the darkening veil of ignorance and infatuation; and this his marvelous spiritual energy defies the narrow limitations of time and space, and will extend even to eternity when the whole system of worlds comes to a conclusion. Therefore, all the innumerable meritorious deeds practised by the Bodhisattvas are dedicated to the emancipation of ignorant beings.

"The Bodhisattvas do not feel, however, that they are being compelled by any external force to devote their lives to the edification and uplifting of the masses. They do not recognise any outward authority, the violation of which may react upon them in the form of a punishment. They have already passed beyond this stage of world-conception which implies a dualism; they are on the contrary moving in a much wider and higher sphere of thought. All that is done by them springs from their spontaneous will, from the free activity of the Bodhicitta, which constitutes their reason of existence; and thus there is nothing compulsory in their thoughts and movements. [To use Laotzean terminology, they are practising non-action, *wu wei*, and whatever may appear to the ignorant and unenlightened as a strenuous and restless life, is merely a natural

overflow from the inexhaustible fount of energy called Bodhicitta, heart of intelligence]" ¹

Bodhisattva in "Primitive" Buddhism.

The notion of Bodhisattva was not entirely absent in "primitive" Buddhism, only it did not have such a wide signification. All Buddhas were Bodhisattvas in their former lives. The Jātaka stories minutely describe what self-sacrificing deeds were done by them and how by the karma of these merits they finally attained Buddhahood. Çākyamuni was not the only Buddha, but there had already been seven or twenty-four Buddhas prior to him, and the coming Buddha to be known as Maitreya is believed to be disciplining himself in the Tuṣita heaven and going through the stages of Bodhisattvahood. The one who is thus destined to be the future Buddha must be extraordinarily gifted in spiritual energy. He must pass through eons of self-discipline, must practise deeds of non-atman with unflinching courage and fortitude through innumerable existences.

The following quotation from the Jātaka tales will be sufficient to see what ponderous and exacting conditions were conceived by the so-called Hinayānists to be necessary for a human being to become a fully qualified Buddha. ²

¹ This is a very rough summary of the doctrine that is known as Parivarta and expounded in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*, fas. 21-22 where ten forms of Parivarta are distinguished and explained at length

² Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*, the "Story of Sumedha," pp. 14-15

"Of men it is he, and only he, who is in a fit condition by the attainment of saintship in that same existence, that can successfully make a wish to be a Buddha. Of those in a fit condition it is only he who makes the wish in the presence of a living Buddha that succeeds in his wish; after the death of a Buddha a wish made at a relic shrine, or at the foot of a Bo-tree, will not be successful. Of those who make the wish in the presence of a Buddha it is he and only he who has retired from the world that can successfully make the wish, and not one who is a layman. Of those who have retired from the world it is only he who is possessed of the Five High Powers and is master of the Eight Attainments that can successfully make the wish, and no one can do so who is lacking in these excellences. Of those, even, who possess these excellences, it is he, and only he, who has such firm resolve that he is ready to sacrifice his life for the Buddhas that can successfully make the wish, but no other. Of those who possess this resolve it is he, and only he, who has great zeal, determination, strenuousness, and endeavor in striving for the qualities that make a Buddha that is successful. The following comparisons will show the intensity of the zeal. If he is such a one as to think: "The man who, if all within the rim of the world were to become water, would be ready to swim across it with his own arms and get further shore,— he is the one to attain the Buddhahood. or, in case all within the rim of the world were to become a

1 jungle of bamboo, would be ready to elbow and trample his way through it and get to the further side,—he is the one to attain the Buddhahood; or, in case all within the rim of the world were to become a *terra firma* of thick-set javelins, would be ready to tread on them and go afoot to the further side,—he is the one to attain the Buddhahood; or, in case all within the rim of the world were to become live coals, would be ready to tread on them and so get to the further side,—he is the one to attain the Buddhahood,—if he deems not even one of these feats too hard for himself but has such great zeal, determination, strenuousness, and power of endeavor that he would perform these feats in order to attain the Buddhahood, then, but not otherwise, will his wish succeed."

From this it is apparent that everybody could not become a Buddha in "primitive" Buddhism; the highest aspiration that could be cherished by him was to believe in the teachings of Buddha, to follow the precepts laid down by him, and to attain at most to Arhatship. The idea of Arhatship, however, was considered by Mahāyānists cold, impassionate, and hard-hearted, for the saint calmly reviews the sight of the suffering masses; and therefore Arhatship was altogether unsatisfactory to be the object for the Bodhisattvas of their high religious aspirations.

The Mahāyānists wanted to go even beyond the attainment of Arhatship, however exalted its spirituality may be. They wanted to make every humble soul

a being like Çākyaṃuni, they wanted lavishly to distribute the bliss of enlightenment; they wanted to remove all the barriers that were supposed to lie between Buddhahood and the common humanity. But how could they do this when the iron hands of karma held tight the fate of each individual! How was it possible for him to identify his being with the ideal of mankind? Perhaps this serious problem could not very well be solved by Buddhists, when their memory of the majestic personality of Çākyaṃuni was still vivid before their mental eyes. It was probably no easy task for them to overcome the feeling of awe and reverence which was so deeply engraved in their hearts, and to raise themselves to such a height as reached by their Master, even ideally. This was certainly an act of sacrilege. But, as time advances, the personal recollection of the Master would naturally wane and would not play so much influence as their own religious consciousness which is ever fresh and active. Generally speaking, all great historical characters that command the reverence and awe of posterity do so only when their words or acts or both unravel the deepest secrets of the human heart. And this feeling of awe and reverence and even of worship is not due so much to the great characters themselves as to the worshiper's own religious consciousness. History passes, but the heart persists. An individual called Çākyaṃuni may be forgotten in the course of time, but the sacred chord in the inmost heart struck by him reverberates through eternity. So with the Mahāyāna Buddhists,

the religious sentiment at last asserted itself in spite of the personal recollection and reverential feeling for the Master. And perhaps in the following way was the reasoning then advanced by them relative to the great problem of Buddhahood

We are all Bodhisattvas.

As Çākyaṃuni was a Bodhisattva in his former lives destined to become a Buddha, so we are all Bodhisattvas and even Buddhas in a certain sense, when we understand that all sentient beings, the Buddha not excepted, are one in the Dharmakāya. The Dharmakāya manifests in us as Bodhi which is the essence of Buddhas as well as of Bodhisattvas. This Bodhi can suffer no change whatever in quantity even when the Bodhisattva attains finally to the highest human perfection as Çākyaṃuni Buddha. In this spirit, therefore, the Buddha exclaimed when he obtained enlightenment, "It is marvelous indeed that all beings animate and inanimate universally partake of the nature of Tathāgatahood." The only difference between a Buddha and the ignorant masses is that the latter do not make manifest in them the glory of Bodhi.

They only are not Bodhisattvas who, enveloped in the divine rays of light in a celestial abode, philosophically review the world of tribulations. Even we mortals made of dust are Bodhisattvas, incarnates of the Bodhi, capable of being united in the all-embracing love of the Dharmakāya and also of obliterating the

individual curse of karma in the eternal and absolute intelligence of the Dharmakâya. As soon as we come to live in this love and intelligence, individual existences are no hindrance to the turning over (*parivarta*) of one's spiritual merits (*punya*) to the service of others. Let us only have an insight into the spirituality of our existence and we are all Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. Let us abandon the selfish thought of entering into Nirvana that is conceived to extinguish the fire of heart and leave only the cold ashes of intellect. Let us have sympathy for all suffering beings and turn over all our merits, however small, to their benefit and happiness. For in this way we are all made the Bodhisattvas. ¹

The Buddha's Life.

This spirit of universal love prevails in all Mahâyâna literature, and the Bodhisattvas are everywhere represented as exercising it with utmost energy. The Mahâyânists, therefore, could not rest satisfied with a simple, prosaic, and earthly account of Çâkyamuni,

¹ It may be interesting to Christian readers to note in this connection that modern Buddhists do not reject altogether the idea of vicarious atonement, for their religious conviction as seen here admits the *parivarta* of a Bodhisattva's merits to the spiritual welfare of his fellow-creatures. But they will object to the Christian interpretation that Jesus was sent down on earth by his heavenly father for the special mission to atone for the original sin through the shedding of his innocent blood, for this is altogether too puerile and materialistic.

they wanted to make it as ideal and poetic as possible, illustrating the gospel of love, as was conceived by them, in every phase of the life of the Buddha.

The Mahāyānists first placed the Buddha in the Tuṣita heaven before his birth, (as was done by the Hīnayānists,) made him feel pity for the distressed world below, made him resolve to deliver it from "the ocean of misery which throws up sickness as its foam, tossing with the waves of old age, and rushing with the dreadful onflow of death," and after his Parinirvana, they made him abide forever on the peak of the Mount Vulture delivering the sermon of immortality to a great assemblage of spiritual beings. In this wise, they explained the significance of the appearance of Çākyamuni on earth, which was nothing but a practical demonstration of the "Great Loving Heart" (*mahākaruṇācitta*)

The Bodhisattva and Love.

Nāgārjuna in his work on the *Bodhicitta*¹ elucidates the Mahāyānist notion of Bodhisattvahood as follows:

"Thus the essential nature of all Bodhisattvas is a great loving heart (*mahākaruṇācitta*), and all sentient beings constitute the object of its love. Therefore, all the Bodhisattvas do not cling to the blissful taste

¹ The full title of the work is *A Treatise on the Transcendentality of Bodhicitta* (Nanjo, No. 1304). It is a little book consisting of seven or eight sheets in big Chinese type. It was translated into Chinese by Dānapāla (Shih Hu) during the tenth century of the Christian Era.

that is produced by the divers modes of mental tranquillisation (*dhyāna*), do not covet the fruit of their meritorious deeds, which may heighten their own happiness.

"Their spiritual state is higher than that of the *Çrāvakas*, for they do not leave all sentient beings behind them [as the *Çrāvakas* do]. They practise altruism, they seek the fruit of Buddha-knowledge [instead of *Çrāvaka*-knowledge].

"With a great loving heart they look upon the sufferings of all beings, who are diversely tortured in *Avīci* Hell in consequence of their sins — a hell whose limits are infinite and where an endless round of misery is made possible on account of all sorts of karma [committed by sentient creatures] The *Bodhisattvas* filled with pity and love desire to suffer themselves for the sake of those miserable beings.

"But they are well acquainted with the truth that all those diverse sufferings causing diverse states of misery are in one sense apparitional and unreal, while in another sense they are not so. They know also that those who have an intellectual insight into the emptiness (*cūnyatā*) of all existences, thoroughly understand why those rewards of karma are brought forth in such and such ways [through ignorance and infatuation].

"Therefore, all *Bodhisattvas*, in order to emancipate sentient beings from misery, are inspired with great spiritual energy and mingle themselves in the filth of birth and death. Though thus they make themselves

subject to the laws of birth and death, their hearts are free from sins and attachments. They are like unto those immaculate, undefiled lotus-flowers which grow out of mire, yet are not contaminated by it.

"Their great hearts of sympathy which constitute the essence of their being never leave suffering creatures behind [in their journey towards enlightenment]. Their spiritual insight is in the emptiness (*cūnyatā*) of things, but [their work of salvation] is never outside the world of sins and sufferings "

The Meaning of Bodhi and Bodhicitta.

What is the meaning of the word "Bodhisattva"? It is a Sanskrit term consisting of two words, "Bodhi," and "sattva." *Bodhi* which comes from the root *budh* meaning "to wake," is generally rendered "knowledge" or "intelligence." *Sattva* (*sat-tva*) literally means "state of being"; thus "existence," "creature," or "that which is," being its English equivalent. "Bodhisattva" as one word means "a being of intelligence," or "a being whose essence is intelligence." Why the Mahāyānists came to adopt this word in contradistinction to *Ārāvaka* is easily understood, when we see what special significance they attached to the conception of Bodhi in their philosophy. When Bodhi was used by the *Ārāvakas* in the simple sense of knowledge, it did not bear any particular import. But as soon as it came to express some metaphysical relation to the conception of Dharmakāya, it ceased to be used in its generally accepted sense.

Bodhi, according to the Mahâyânists, is an expression of the Dharmakâya in the human consciousness. Philosophically speaking, Suchness or Bhûtatathâtâ is an ontological term, and Dharmakâya or Tathâgata or Buddha bears a religious significance; while all these three, Bodhi, Bhûtatathâtâ, and Dharmakâya, and their synonyms are nothing but different aspects of one and the same reality refracting through the several defective lenses of a finite intellect.

Bodhi, though essentially an epistemological term, assumes a psychological sense when it is used in conjunction with citta, i.e. heart or soul. Bodhicitta, or Bodhihṛdaya which means the same thing, is more generally used than Bodhi singly in the Mahâyâna texts, especially when its religious import is emphasised above its intellectual one. Bodhicitta, viz intelligence-heart is a reflex in the human heart of its religious archetype, the Dharmakâya.

Bodhicitta when further amplified is called anuttara-samyak-sambodhicitta, that is, "intelligence-heart that is supreme and most perfect."

It will be easily understood now that what constitutes the essence of the Bodhicitta is the very same thing that makes up the Dharmakâya. For the former is nothing but an expression of the latter, though finitely, fragmentarily, imperfectly realised in us. The citta is an image and the Dharmakâya the prototype, yet one is just as real as the other, only the two must not be conceived dualistically. There is a Dharmakâya, there is a human heart, and the former reflects itself

in the latter much after the fashion of the lunar reflection in the water:—to think in this wise is not perfectly correct; because the fundamental teaching of Buddhism is to view all these three conceptions, the Dharmakāya, human heart, and the reflections of the former in the latter, as different forms of one and the same activity.

Love and Karunā.

The Bodhicitta or Intelligence-heart, therefore, like the Dharmakāya is essentially love and intelligence, or, to use Sanskrit terms, *karunā* and *prajñā*. Here some may object to the use of the term "love" for *karunā*, perhaps on the ground that *karunā* does not exactly correspond to the Christian notion of love, as it savors more of the sense of commiseration. But if we understand by love a sacrifice of the self for the sake of others (and it cannot be more than that), then *karunā* can correctly be rendered love, even in the Christian sense. Is not the Bodhisattva willing to abandon his own Nirvanic peace for the interests of suffering creatures? Is he not willing to dedicate the karma of his meritorious deeds performed in his successive existences to the general welfare of his fellow-beings? Is not his one fundamental motive that governs all his activities in life directed towards a universal emancipation of all sentient beings? Is he not perfectly willing to forsake all the thoughts and passions that arise from egoism and to embrace the will of the Dharmakāya? If this be the case, then there is,

no reason why karuṇā should not be rendered by love.

Christians say that without love we are become sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and Buddhists would declare that without karuṇā we are like unto a dead vine hanging over a frozen boulder, or like unto the cold ashes left after a blazing fire.

Some may say, however, that the Buddhist sympathy or commiseration somewhat betrays a sense of passive contemplation on evils. When Christians say that God loves his creatures, the love implies activity and shows God's willingness to do whatever for the actual benefits of his subject-beings. Quite true. Yet when the Buddha is stated to have declared that all sentient beings in the triple world are his own children or that he will not enter into his final Nirvana unless all beings in the three thousand great chilocosms, not a single soul excepted, are emancipated from the misery of birth and death, his self-sacrificing love must be considered to be all-comprehensive and at the same time full of energy and activity. Whatever objections there may be, we do not see any sufficient reason against speaking of the love-essence of the Dharmakāya and the Bodhicitta.

Nāgārjuna and Sthiramati on the Bodhicitta.

Says Nāgārjuna in his *Discourse on the Transcendentality of the Bodhicitta* "The Bodhicitta is free from all determinations, that is, it is not included in the categories of the five skandhas, the twelve āyatanas, and the eighteen dhātus. It is not a particular

existence which is palpable. It is non-atmanic, universal. It is uncreate and its self-essence is void [*śūnya*, immaterial, or transcendental].

"One who understands the nature of the Bodhicitta sees everything with a loving heart, for love is the essence of the Bodhicitta.

"The Bodhicitta is the highest essence.

"Therefore, all Bodhisattvas find their *raison d'être* of existence in this great loving heart.

"The Bodhicitta, abiding in the heart of sameness (*samatā*) creates individual means of salvation (*upaya*).¹

¹ Upaya, meaning "expedient," "stratagem," "device," or "craft," has a technical sense in Buddhism. It is used in contrast to intelligence (*prajñā*) and is synonymous with love (*karuṇā*). So, Vimalakīrti says in the sūtra bearing his name (chap. 8, verses 1—4): "Prajñā is the mother of the Bodhisattva and Upaya his father; there is no leader of humanity who is not born of them." Intelligence (*prajñā*) is the one, the universal, representing the principle of sameness (*samatā*), while Upaya is the many, being the principle of manifoldness (*nāndatā*). From the standpoint of pure intelligence, the Bodhisattvas do not see any particular suffering existences, for there is nothing that is not of the Dharmakāya, but when they see the universe from the standpoint of their love-essence, they recognise everywhere the conditions of misery and sin that arise from clinging to the forms of particularity. To remove these, they devise all possible means that are directed towards the attainment of the final aim of existence. There is only one religion, religion of truth, but there are many ways, many means, many upayas, all issuing from the all-embracing love of the Dharmakāya and equally efficient to lead the masses to supreme enlightenment and universal good. Therefore, ontologically speaking, this universe, the Buddhist would say, is nothing but a grand display of Upayas by the Dharmakāya that desires thereby to lead all sentient beings to the ultimate.

One who understands this heart becomes emancipated from the dualistic view of birth and death and performs such acts as are beneficial both to oneself and to others."

Sthiramati advocates in his *Discourse on the Mahâyâna-Dharmadhātu*¹ the same view as Nâgârjuna's on the nature of the Bodhicitta, which I summarise here: "Nirvâna, Dharmakâya, Tathâgata, Tathâgata-garbha, Pâramârtha, Buddha, Bodhicitta, or Bhûtatathâtâ,—all these terms signify merely so many different aspects of one and the same reality, and Bodhicitta is the name given to a form of the Dharmakâya or Bhûtatathâtâ as it manifests itself in the human heart, and its perfection, or negatively its liberation from all egoistic impurities, constitutes the state of Nirvana."

Being a reflex of the Dharmakâya, the Bodhicitta is practically the same as the original in all its characteristics; so continues Sthiramati "It is free from compulsive activities; it has no beginning, it has no end; it cannot be defiled by impurities, it cannot be obscured by egoistic individualistic prejudices; it is incorporeal, it is the spiritual essence of Buddhas,

realisation of Buddhahood. In many cases, thus it is extremely difficult to render upaya by any of its English equivalents and yet to retain its original technical sense unsuffered. This is also the case with many other Buddhist terms, among which we may mention Bodhi, Dharmakâya, Prajñâ, Citta, Parivarta, etc. The Chinese translators have *fang p'ien* for upaya which means "means-accommodation."

¹ Its full title is *A Discourse on the Non-duality of the Mahâyâna-Dharmadhātu*. It consists of less than a dozen pages in ordinary Chinese large print. It was translated by Devaprajñâ and others in the year 691 A. D.

it is the source of all virtues earthly as well as transcendental; it is constantly becoming, yet its original purity is never lost.

"It may be likened unto the ever-shining sunlight which may temporarily be hidden behind the clouds. All the modes of passion and sin arising from egoism may sometimes darken the light of the Bodhicitta, but the Citta itself forever remains free from these external impurities. It may again be likened unto all-comprehending space which remains eternally identical, whatever happenings and changes may occur in things enveloped therein. When the Bodhicitta manifests itself in a relative world, it looks as if being subject to constant becoming, but in reality it transcends all determinations, it is above the reach of birth and death (*samsāra*).

"So long as it remains buried under innumerable sins arising from ignorance and egoism, it is productive of no earthly or heavenly benefit. Like the lotus-flower whose petals are yet unfolded, like the gold that is deeply entombed under the débris of dung and dirt, or like the light of the full moon eclipsed by Açura, the Bodhicitta, when blindfolded by the clouds of passion, avarice, ignorance, and folly, does not reveal its intrinsic spiritual worth.

"Destroy at once with your might and main all those entanglements; then like the full-bloomed lotus-flower, like genuine gold purified from dirt and dust, like the moon in a cloudless sky, like the sun in its full glory, like mother earth producing all kinds of

cereals, like the ocean containing innumerable treasures, the eternal bliss of the Bodhicitta will be upon all sentient beings. All sentient beings are then emancipated from the misery of ignorance and folly, their hearts are filled with love and sympathy and free from the clinging to things worthless.

"However defiled and obscured the Bodhicitta may find itself in profane hearts, it is essentially the same as that in all Buddhas. Therefore, says the Muni of Çakya: 'O Çâriputra, the world of sentient beings is not different from the Dharmakâya; the Dharmakâya is not different from the world of sentient beings. What constitutes the Dharmakâya is the world of sentient beings; and what constitutes the world of sentient beings is the Dharmakâya.'

"As far as the Dharmakâya or the Bodhicitta is concerned, there is no radical distinction to be made between profane hearts and the Buddha's heart; yet when observed from the human standpoint [that is, from the phenomenal side of existence] the following general classification can be made:

"(1) The heart hopelessly distorted by numberless egoistic sins and condemned to an eternal transmigration of birth and death which began in the timeless past, is said to be in the state of profanity.

"(2) The heart that, loathing the misery of wandering in birth and death and taking leave of all sinful and depraved conditions, seeks the Bodhi in the ten virtues of perfection (*pâramitâ*) and 84,000 Buddha-dharmas and disciplines itself in all meritorious deeds,

is said to be the [spiritual] state of a Bodhisattva.

"(3) The state in which the heart is emancipated from the obscuration of all passions, has distanced all sufferings, has eternally effaced the stain of all sins and corruptions, is pure, purer, and purest, abides in the essence of Dharma, has reached the height from which the states of all sentient beings are surveyed, has attained the consummation of all knowledges, has realised the highest type of manhood, has gained the power of spiritual spontaneity which frees one from attachment and hesitation, — this spiritual state is that of the fully, perfectly, enlightened Tathâgata".

The Awakening of the Bodhicitta.

The Bodhicitta is present in the hearts of all sentient beings. Only in Buddhas it is fully awakened and active with its immaculate virility, while in ordinary mortals it is dormant and miserably crippled by its unenlightened intercourse with the world of sensuality. One of the most favorite parables told by the Mahâyânists to illustrate this point is to compare the Bodhicitta to the moonlight in the heavens. When the moon shines with her silvery light in the clear, cloudless skies, she is reflected in every drop and in every mass of water on the earth. The crystal dew on the quivering leaves reflect her like so many pearls hung on the branches. Every little water-pool, probably formed temporarily by heavy showers in the daytime, reflects her like so many stars descended

on earth. Perhaps some of the pools are muddy and others even filthy, but the moonlight does not refuse to reflect her immaculate image in them. The image is just as perfect there as in a clear, undisturbed, transparent lake, where cows quench their thirst and swans bathe their taintless feathers. Wherever there is the least trace of water, there is seen a heavenly image of the goddess of night. Even so with the Bodhicitta: where there exists a little warmth of the heart, there it unfailingly glorifies itself in its best as circumstances permit.

Now, the question is: How should this dormant Bodhicitta in our hearts be awakened to its full sense? This is answered more or less definitely in almost all the Mahâyâna writings, and we may here recite the words of Vasubandhu from his *Discourse on the Awakening of the Bodhicitta*,¹ for they give us a somewhat systematic statement of those conditions which tend to awaken the Bodhicitta from its lethargic inactivity. (Chap II.)

The Bodhicitta or Intelligence-heart is awakened in us (1) by thinking of the Buddhas, (2) by reflecting on the faults of material existence, (3) by observing the deplorable state in which sentient beings are living, and finally (4) by aspiring after those virtues which are acquired by a Tathâgata in the highest enlightenment.

¹ This work was translated by Kumârajîva into Chinese at the beginning of the fifth century A. D. It is divided into two fascicles, each consisting of about one score of Chinese pages.

* To describe these conditions more definitely:

(1) *By thinking of the Buddhas.* "All Buddhas, in the ten quarters, of the past, of the future, and of the present, when first started on their way to enlightenment, were not quite free from passions and sins (*kleṣa*) any more than we are at present; but they finally succeeded in attaining the highest enlightenment and became the noblest beings.

"All the Buddhas, by strength of their inflexible spiritual energy, were capable of attaining perfect enlightenment. If enlightenment is attainable at all, why should we not attain it?

"All the Buddhas, erecting high the torch of wisdom through the darkness of ignorance and keeping awake an excellent heart, submitted themselves to penance and mortification, and finally emancipated themselves from the bondage of the triple world. Following their steps, we, too, could emancipate ourselves.

"All the Buddhas, the noblest type of mankind, successfully crossed the great ocean of birth and death and of passions and sins; why, then, we, being creatures of intelligence, could also cross the sea of transmigration.

"All the Buddhas manifesting great spiritual power sacrificed the possessions, body, and life, for the attainment of omniscience (*sarvajñā*); and we, too, could follow their noble examples."

(2) *The faults of the material existence.* "This our bodily existence consisting of the five skandhas and the four mahats (elements) is a perpetuator of innu-

merable • evil deeds; and therefore it should be cast aside. • This our bodily existence constantly secretes from its nine orifices filth and impurities which are truly loathsome; and therefore it should be cast aside. This our bodily existence, harboring within itself anger, avarice, and infatuation, and other innumerable evil passions, consumes a good heart; and therefore it should be destroyed. This our bodily existence is like a bubble, like a spatter, and is decaying every minute. It is an undesirable possession and should be abandoned. This our bodily existence engulfed in ignorance is creating evil karma all the time, which throws us into the whirlpool of transmigration through the six gatis."

(3) *The miserable conditions of sentient beings which arouse the sympathy of the Bodhisattvas* "All sentient beings are under the bondage of ignorance Spell-bound by folly and infatuation, they are suffering the severest pain Not believing in the law of karma, they are accumulating evils, going astray from the path of righteousness, they are following false doctrines, sinking deeper in the whirlpool of passions, they are being drowned in the four waters of sin.

"They are being tortured with all sorts of pain. They are needlessly haunted by the fear of birth and death and old age, and do not seek the path of emancipation. Mortified with grief, anxiety, tribulation, they do not refrain from committing further foul deeds. Clinging to their beloved ones and being always afraid of separation, they do not understand that there

is no individual reality, that individual existences are not worth clinging to. Trying to shun enmity, hatred, pain, they cherish more hatred."

(4) *The virtues of the Tathâgata.* "All the Tathâgatas, by virtue of their discipline, have acquired a noble, dignified mien which aspires every beholder with the thought that dispels pain and woe. The Dharmakâya of all the Tathâgatas is immortal and pure and free from evil attachments. All the Tathâgatas are possessed of moral discipline, tranquillity, intelligence, and emancipation. They are not hampered by intellectual prejudices and have become the sanctuary of immaculate virtues. They have the ten bâlas (powers), four abhayas (fearlessness), great compassion, and the three smṛtyupasthânas (contemplations). They are omniscient, and their love for suffering beings knows no bounds and brings all creatures back to the path of righteousness, who have gone astray on account of ignorance."



In short, the Intelligence-heart or Bodhicitta is awakened in us either when love for suffering creatures (which is innate in us) is called forth, or when our intellect aspires after the highest enlightenment, or when these two psychical activities are set astir under some favorable circumstances. As the Bodhicitta is a manifestation of the Dharmakâya in our limited conscious mind, it constantly longs for a unification with

its archetype, in spite of the curse of ignorance heavily weighing upon it. When this unification is not effected for any reason, the heart (*citta*) shows its dissatisfaction in some way or other. The dissatisfaction may take sometimes a morbid course, and may result in pessimism, or misanthropy, or suicide, or asceticism, or some other kindred eccentric practices. But if properly guided and naturally developed, the more intense the dissatisfaction, the more energetic will be the spiritual activity of a Bodhisattva.

The Bodhisattva's Pranidhâna.

Having awakened his Bodhicitta from its unconscious slumber, a Bodhisattva will now proceed to make his vows

Let me remark here, however, that "vow" is not a very appropriate term to express the meaning of the Sanskrit *pranidhâna*. *Pranidhâna* is a strong wish, aspiration, prayer, or an inflexible determination to carry out one's will even through an infinite series of rebirths. Buddhists have such a supreme belief in the power of will or spirit that, whatever material limitations, the will is sure to triumph over them and gain its final aim. So, every Bodhisattva is considered to have his own particular *pranidhânas* in order to perform his share in the work of universal salvation. His corporeal shadow may vanish as its karma is exhausted, but his *pranidhâna* survives and takes on a new garment, which procedure being necessary to

keep it ever effective. All that is needed for a Bodhisattva to do this is to make himself a perfect incarnation of his own aspirations, putting everything external and foreign under their controlling spiritual power. Buddhists are so thoroughly idealistic and their faith in ideas and ideals is so unshakable that they firmly believe that whatever they aspire to will come out finally as real fact; and, therefore, the more intense and permanent and born of the inmost needs of humanity, the more certain are our yearnings to be satisfied. (This belief, by the way, will help to explain the popular belief among the Buddhists that any strong passion possessed by a man will survive him and take a form, animate or inanimate, which will best achieve its end.)

According to Vasubandhu whom we have quoted several times, the Bodhisattvas generally are supposed to make the following ten *pranidhânas*, which naturally spring from a great loving heart now awakened in them. ¹

(1) "Would that all the merits I have accumulated in the past as well as in the present be distributed among all sentient beings and make them all aspire after supreme knowledge, and also that this my *pranidhâna* be constantly growing in strength and sustain me throughout my rebirths.

(2) "Would that, through the merits of my work,

¹ The above is a liberal rendering of the first part of the Chapter III, in Vasubandhu's *Bodhicitta*. "

I may, wherever I am born, come in the presence of all Buddhas and pay them homage.

(3) "Would that I be allowed all the time to be near Buddhas like shadow following object, and never to be away from them.

(4) "Would that all Buddhas instruct me in religious truths as best suited to my intelligence and let me finally attain the five spiritual powers of the Bodhi-sattva.

(5) "Would that I be thoroughly conversant with scientific knowledge as well as the first principle of religion and gain an insight into the truth of the Good Law.

(6) "Would that I be able to preach untiringly the truth to all beings, and gladden them, and benefit them, and make them intelligent.

(7) "Would that, through the divine power of the Buddha, I be allowed to travel all over the ten quarters of the world, pay respect to all the Buddhas, listen to their instructions in the Doctrine, and universally benefit all sentient beings.

(8) "Would that, by causing the wheel of immaculate Dharma to revolve, all sentient beings in the ten quarters of the universe who may listen to my teachings or hear my name, be freed from all passions and awaken in them the Bodhicitta.

(9) "Would that I all the time accompany and protect all sentient beings and remove for them things which are not beneficial to them and give them innumerable blessings, and also that through the sacrifice

of my body, life, and possessions I embrace all creatures and thereby practise the Right Doctrine. *

(10) "Would that, though practising the Doctrine in person, my heart be free from the consciousness of compulsion and unnaturalness, as all the Bodhisattvas practise the Doctrine in such a way as not practising it yet leaving nothing unpractised; for they have made their pranidhânas for the sake of all sentient beings."

CHAPTER XII.

TEN STAGES OF BODHISATTVAHOOD

Gradation in our Spiritual Life.

THEORETICALLY speaking, as we have seen above, the Bodhi or Bodhicitta is in every sentient being, and in this sense he is a Bodhisattva. In profane hearts it may be found enveloped in ignorance and egoism, but it can never be altogether annulled. For the Bodhi, when viewed from its absolute aspect, transcends the realm of birth and death (*samsāra*), is beyond the world of toil and trouble and is not subject to any form of defilement. But when it assumes a relative existence and is only partially manifested under the cover of ignorance, there appear various stages of actualisation or of perfection. In some beings it may attain a more meaningful expression than in others, while there may be even those who apparently fail on account of their accursed karma to show the evidence of its presence. This latter class is usually called "Icchantika," that is, people who are completely overwhelmed by the passions. They are morally and religiously a mere corpse which even a great spiritual physician finds it almost impossible to resuscitate. But, philosophically considered, the glory of the Bodhi must be admitted

to be shining even in these dark, ignorant souls. Such souls, perhaps, will have to go round many a cycle of transmigration, before their karma loses its poignancy and becomes susceptible to a moral influence with which they may come in contact.

This accursed force of karma is not the same in all beings, it admits of all possible degrees of strength, and causes some to suffer more intensely than others. But there is no human heart or soul that is absolutely free from the shackle of karma and ignorance, because this very existence of a phenomenal world is a product of ignorance, though this fact does not prove that this life is evil. The only heart that transcends the influence of karma and ignorance and is all-purity, all-love, and all-intelligence, is the Dharmakāya or the absolute Bodhi itself. The life of a Bodhisattva and indeed the end of our religious aspiration is to unfold, realise, and identify ourselves with the love and intelligence of that ideal and yet real Dharmakāya.

The awakening of the Bodhicitta (or intelligence-heart) marks the first step towards the highest good of human life. This awakening must pass through several stages of religious discipline before it attains perfection. These stages are generally estimated by the Mahāyānists at ten. They appear, however, to our modern sceptical minds to be of no significant consequence, nor can we detect any very practical and well-defined distinction between successive stages. We fail to understand what religious necessity impelled the Hindu Buddhists to establish such, apparently un-

important stages one after another in our religious life. We can see, however, that the first awakening of the Bodhicitta does not transform us all at once to Buddhahood; we have yet to overcome with strenuous efforts the baneful influence of karma and ignorance which asserts itself too readily in our practical life. But the marking of stages as in the gradation of the Daçabhûmî in our spiritual progress seems to be altogether too artificial. Nevertheless I here take pains as an historical survey to enumerate the ten stages and to give some features supposed to be most characteristic of each Bhûmî (stage) as expounded in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. Probably they will help us to understand what moral conceptions and what religious aspirations were working in the establishment of the doctrine of Daçabhûmî, for it elaborately describes what was considered by the Mahâyânists to be the essential constituents of Bodhisattvahood, and also shows what spiritual routine a Buddhist was expected to pursue.

The ten stages are (1) Pramuditâ, (2) Vimalâ, (3) Prabhâkarî, (4) Arcismatî, (5) Sudurjayâ, (6) Abhimukhî, (7) Dûrangamâ, (8) Acalâ, (9) Sâdhumatî, (10) Dharmameghâ.

(1) *The Pramuditâ.*

Pramuditâ means "delight" or "joy" and marks the first stage of Bodhisattvahood, at which the Buddhists emerge from a cold, self-sufficing, and almost nihilistic contemplation of Nirvâna as fostered by the Çrâvakas

and Pratyekabuddhas. This spiritual emergence and emancipation is psychologically accompanied by an intense feeling of joy, as that which is experienced by a person when he unexpectedly recognises the most familiar face in a faraway land of strangers. For this reason the first stage is called "joy."

Even in the midst of perfect tranquillity of Nirvāna in which all passions are alleged to have died away as declared by ascetics or solitary philosophers, the inmost voice in the heart of the Bodhisattva moans in a sort of dissatisfaction or uneasiness, which, though undefined and seemingly of no significance, yet refuses to be eternally buried in the silent grave of annihilation. He vainly gropes in the darkness; he vainly seeks consolation in the samādhi of non-resistance or non-activity; he vainly finds eternal peace in the gospel of self-negation; his soul is still troubled, not exactly knowing the reason why. But as soon as the Bodhicitta (intelligence-heart) is awakened from its somnolence, as soon as the warmth of love (*mahākarunā*) penetrates into the coldest cell of asceticism, as soon as the light of supreme enlightenment (*mahāprajñā*) dawns upon the darkest recesses of ignorance, the Bodhisattva sees at once that the world is not made for self-seclusion nor for self-negation, that the Dharmakāya is the source of "universal effulgence," that Nirvāna if relatively viewed in contrast to birth-and-death is nothing but *sham* and just as unreal as any worldly existence; and these insights finally lead him to feel that he cannot rest quiet until all sentient beings are

emancipated from the snarl of ignorance and elevated to the same position as now occupied by himself.

(2) *The Vimalā.*

Vimalā means "freedom from defilement," or, affirmatively, "purity." When the Bodhisattva attains, through the spiritual insight gained at the first stage, to rectitude and purity of heart, he reaches the second stage. His heart is now thoroughly spotless, it is filled with tenderness, he fosters no anger, no malice. He is free from all the thoughts of killing any animate beings. Being contented with what belongs to himself, he casts no covetous eyes on things not his own. Faithful to his own betrothed, he does not harbor any evil thoughts on others. His words are always true, faithful, kind, and considerate. He likes truth, honesty, and never flatters.

(3) *The Prabhākari*

Prabhākari means "brightness," that is, of the intellect. This predominantly characterises the spiritual condition of the Bodhisattva at this stage. Here he gains the most penetrating insight into the nature of things. He recognises that all things that are created are not permanent, are conducive to misery, have no abiding selfhood (*ātman*), are destitute of purity, and subject to final decay. He recognises also that the real nature of things, however, is neither created nor subject to destruction, it is eternally abiding in the selfsame essence, and transcends the limits of time

and space. Ignorant beings not seeing this truth are always worrying over things transient and worthless, and constantly consuming their spiritual energy with the fire of avarice, anger, and infatuation, which in turn accumulates for their future existences the ashes of misery and suffering. This wretched condition of sentient beings further stimulates the loving heart of the Bodhisattva to seek the highest intelligence of Buddha, which, giving him great spiritual energy, enables him to prosecute the gigantic task of universal emancipation. His desire for the Buddha-intelligence and his faith in it are of such immense strength that he would not falter even for a moment, if he is only assured of the attainment of the priceless treasure, to plunge himself into the smeltering fire of a volcano.

(4) *The Arciṣmati.*

Arciṣmati, meaning "inflammation," is the name given to the fourth stage, at which the Bodhisattva consumes all the sediments of ignorance and evil passions in the fiery crucible of the purifying Bodhi. He practises here most strenuously the thirty-seven virtues called Bodhipāksikas which are conducive to the perfection of the Bodhi. These virtues consist of seven categories:

(I) Four Contemplations (*smṛtyusthāna*). 1. On the impurity of the body; 2. On the evils of sensuality; 3. On the evanescence of the wordly interests; 4. On the non-existence of *ātman* in things composite.

(II) Four Righteous Efforts (*samyakprahāna*): 1. To

prevent evils from arising; 2. To suppress evils already existing; 3. To produce good not yet in existence; 4. To preserve good already in existence.

(III) Four Forces of the Will (*ṛddhipāda*): 1. The determination to accomplish what is willed; 2. The energy to concentrate the mind on the object in view; 3. The power of retaining the object in memory; 4. The intelligence that perceives the way to Nirvāna.

(IV) Five Powers (*indriya*), from which all moral good is produced: 1. Faith; 2. Energy, 3. Circumspection; 4. Equilibrium, or tranquillity of mind; 5. Intelligence.

(V) Five Functions (*bala*): Same as the above ¹

(VI) Seven Constituents of the Bodhi (*bodhyanga*): 1. The retentive power; 2. Discrimination, 3. Energy; 4. Contentment; 5. Modesty; 6. The balanced mind, 7. Large-heartedness.

(VII) The Eightfold Noble Path (*āryamārga*). 1. Right view; 2. Right resolve, 3. Right speech, 4. Right conduct, 5. Right livelihood, 6. Right recollection; 8. Right tranquilisation, or contemplation

¹ The distinction between the five *indriyas* and the five *balas* seems to be rather redundant. But the Hindu philosophers usually distinguish actor from action, agent from function or operation. Thus the sense-organs are distinguished from sensations or sense-consciousnesses, and the *manovijñāna* (mind) from its functions such as thinking, attention, memory, etc. The *ātman* has thus come to be considered the central agent that controls all the sensuous and intellectual activities. Though the Buddhists do not recognise this differentiation of actor and action in reality, they sometimes loosely follow the popular usage.

(5) *The Sudurjayā.*

Sudurjayā means "very difficult to conquer." The Bodhisattva reaches this stage when he, completely armed with the thirty-seven Bodhipākṣikas and guided by the beacon-light of Bodhi, undauntedly breaks through the column of evil passions. Provided with the two spiritual provisions, love and wisdom, and being benefitted by the spirits of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, the Bodhisattva has developed an intellectual power to penetrate deep into the system of existence. He perceives the Fourfold Noble Truth in its true light; he perceives the highest reality in the Tathāgata; he also perceives that the highest reality, though absolutely one in its essence, manifests itself in a world of particulars, that relative knowledge (*samvṛtti*) and absolute knowledge (*paramārtha*) are two aspects of one and the same truth, that when subjectivity is disturbed there appears particularity, and that when it is not disturbed there shines only the eternal light of Tathāgatajñā (Tathāgata-knowledge)

(6) *The Abhimukhī.*

Abhimukhī means "showing one's face," that is, the presentation of intelligence (*prajñā*) before the Bodhisattva at this stage.

The Bodhisattva enters upon this stage by reflecting on the essence of all dharmas which are throughout of one nature. When he perceives the truth, his heart is filled with great love, he serenely contemplates on

the life of ignorant beings who are constantly going astray yielding themselves to evil temptations, clinging to the false conception of egoism, and thus making themselves the prey of eternal damnation. He then proceeds to contemplate the development of evils generally. There is ignorance, there is karma; and in this fertile soil of blind activity the seeds of consciousness are sown; the moisture of desire thoroughly soaks them, to which the water of egoism or individuation is poured on. The bed for all forms of particularity is well prepared, and the buds of *nâmarûpas* (name-and-form) most vigorously thrive here. From these we have the flowers of sense-organs, and which come in contact with other existences and produce impressions, feel agreeable sensations, and tenaciously cling to them. From this clinging or the will to live as the principle of individuation or as the principle of *bhâva* as is called in the Twelve *Nidânas*, another body consisting of the five *skandhas* comes into existence, and, passing through all the phases of transformation, dissolves and disappears. All sentient beings are thus kept in a perpetual oscillation of combination and separation, of pleasure and pain, birth and death. But the insight of the Bodhisattva has gone deeply into the inmost essence of things, which forever remains the same and in which there is no production and dissolution.

(7) *The Dûrangamâ*

Dûrangamâ means "going far away." The Bodhisattva enters upon this stage by attaining the so-called

Ūpāyajñā, i e. the knowledge that enables him to produce any means or expediency suitable for his work of salvation. He himself abides in the principles of *śūnyatā* (transcendentality), *animitta* (non-individuality), and *apranihita* (desirelessness), but his loving-kindness keeps him busily engaged among sentient beings. He knows that Buddhas are not creatures radically and essentially different from himself, but he does not stop tendering them due homage. He is always contemplating on the nature of the Absolute, but he does not abandon the practice of accumulating merits. He is no more encumbered with worldly thoughts, yet he does not disdain managing secular affairs. He keeps himself perfectly aloof from the consuming fire of passion, but he plans all possible means for the sake of sentient beings to quench the enraging flames of avarice (*lobha*), anger (*dveṣa*), and infatuation (*moha*). He knows that all individual existences are like dream, mirage, or the reflection of the moon in the water, but he works and toils in the world of particulars and submits himself to the domination of karma. He is well aware of the transcendental nature of Pure Land (*sukhāvatī*), but he describes it with material colors for the sake of unenlightened masses. He knows that the *Dharmakāya* of all the Buddhas is not a material existence, but he does not refuse to dignify himself with the thirty-two major and eighty minor excellent features of a great man or god (*mahāpuruṣa*). He knows that the language of all the Buddhas does not fall within the ken of human comprehension, but

he endeavors with all contrivances (*upāya*) to make it intelligible enough to the understanding of people. He knows that all the Buddhas perceive the past, present, and future in the twinkling of an eye, but he adapts himself to divers conditions of the material world and endeavors to help sentient beings to understand the significance of the Bodhi according to their destinies and dispositions. In short, the Bodhisattva himself lives on a higher plane of spirituality far removed from the defilements of worldliness; but he does not withdraw himself to this serene, unmolested subjectivity; he boldly sets out in the world of particulars and senses; and, placing himself on the level of ignorant beings, he works like them, he toils like them, and suffers like them, and he never fails all these times to practise the gospel of lovingkindness and to turn over (*parivarta*) all his merits towards the emancipation and spiritual edification of the masses, that is, he never gets tired of practising the ten virtues of perfection (*pāramitā*).

That is to say, (1) the Bodhisattva practises the virtue of charity (*dāna*) by freely giving away to all sentient creatures all the merits that he has acquired by following the path of Buddhas (2) He practises the virtue of good conduct (*śīla*) by destroying all the evil passions that disturb serenity of mind. (3) He practises the virtue of patience (*kṣānti*), for he never gets irritated or excited over what is done to him by ignorant beings. (4) He practises the virtue of strenuousness (*śriya*), for he never gets tired of

accumulating merits and of promoting good-will among his fellow-creatures. (5) He practises the virtue of calmness (*dhyâna*), for his mind is never distracted in steadily pursuing his way to supreme knowledge. (6) He practises the virtue of intelligence (*prajñâ*), for he always restrains his thoughts from wandering away from the path of absolute truth. (7) He practises the virtue of tactfulness (*upâya*), for he has an inexhaustible mine of expediences ready at his command for the work of universal salvation. (8) He practises the virtue of will-to-do (*pranidhâna*) by determinedly following the dictates of the highest intelligence. (9) He practises the virtue of strength (*bala*), for no evil influences, no heretical thoughts can ever frustrate or slacken his efforts for the general welfare of people. (10) Finally, he practises the virtue of knowledge, (*jñâna*), by truthfully comprehending and expounding the ultimate nature of beings.

(8) *The Acalâ.*

Acalâ, "immovable," is the name for the eighth stage of Bodhisattvahood. When a Bodhisattva, transcending all forms of discursive or deliberate knowledge, acquires the highest, perfect knowledge called *anutpattikadharmakṣânti*, he is said to have gone beyond the seventh stage. *Anutpattikadharmakṣânti* literally means "not-created-being-forbearance"; and the Buddhists use the term in the sense of keeping one's thoughts in conformity to the views that nothing in this world

has ever been created, that things are such as they are, i. e. they are Suchness itself. This knowledge is also called non-conscious or non-deliberate knowledge in contradistinction to relative knowledge that constitutes all our logical and demonstrative knowledge. Strictly speaking, this so-called knowledge is not knowledge in its ordinary signification, it is a sort of unconscious or subconscious intelligence, or immediate knowledge as some call it, in which not only willing and acting, but also knowing and willing are one single, undivided exhibition of activity, all logical or natural transition from one to the other being altogether absent. Here indeed knowledge is will and will is action; "Let there be light," and there is light, and the light is good, it is the state of a divine mind.

At this stage of perfection, the Bodhisattva's spiritual condition is compared to that of a person who, attempting when in a dreamy state to cross deep waters, musters all his energy, plans all schemes, and, while at last at the point of starting on the journey, suddenly wakes up and finds all his elaborate preparations to no purpose. The Bodhisattva hitherto showed untiring spiritual efforts to attain the highest knowledge, steadily practised all virtues tending to the acquirement of Nirvâna, and heroically endeavored to exterminate all evil passions, and at the culmination of all these exercises, he enters all of a sudden upon the stage of Acala' and finds the previous elaboration mysteriously vanished from his conscious mind. He cherishes

now no desire for Buddhahood, Nirvâna, or Bodhicitta, much less after worldliness, egoism, or the satisfaction of evil passions. The conscious striving that distinguished all his former course has now given way to a state of spontaneous activity, of saintly innocence, and of divine playfulness. He wills and it is done. He aspires and it is actualised. He is nature herself, for there is no trace in his activity that betrays any artificial lucubration, any voluntary or compulsory restraint. This state of perfect ideal freedom may be called esthetical, which characterises the work of a genius. There is here no trace of consciously following some prescribed laws, no pains of elaborately conforming to the formula. To put this poetically, the inner life of the Bodhisattva at this stage is like the lilies of the field whose glory is greater than that of Solomon in all his human magnificence.

Kant's remarks on this point are very suggestive, and I will quote the following from his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Reclam edition, p. 173):

"Also muss die Zweckmässigkeit im Produkte der schönen Kunst, ob sie zwar absichtlich ist, doch nicht absichtlich scheinen: d. i., schöne Kunst muss als Natur anzusehen sein, ob man sich ihrer zwar als Kunst bewusst ist. Als Natur aber erscheint ein Produkt der Kunst dadurch, dass zwar alle Punktlichkeit in der Uebereinkunft mit Regeln, nach denen allein das Produkt das werden kann, was es soll sein, angetroffen wird, aber ohne Peinlichkeit, d. i., ohne eine Spur zu zeigen, dass die Regel dem Künstler vor Augen

self-essence (*svabhâva*) of all beings; by the⁶ Artha-pratisamvid, their individual attributes; by the Nîrûkti-pratisamvid, their indestructibility; by the Pratibhâna-pratisamvid, their eternal order. Again, by the first intelligence they understand that all individual dharmas have no absolute reality; by the second, that they are all subject to the law of constant becoming; by the third, that they are no more than mere names; by the fourth, that even mere names as such are of some value. Again, by the first intelligence, they comprehend that all dharmas are of one reality which is indestructible; by the second, that this one reality differentiating itself becomes subject to the law of causation; by the third, that by virtue of a superior understanding all Buddhas become the object of admiration and the haven of all sentient beings; by the fourth, that in the one body of truth all Buddhas preach infinite lights of the Dharma

(10) *The Dharmameghâ.*

Dharmameghâ, "clouds of dharma," is the name of the tenth and final stage of Bodhisattvahood. The Bodhisattvas have now practised all virtues of purity, accumulated all the constituents of Bodhi, are fortified with great power and intelligence, universally practise the principle of great love and sympathy, have deeply penetrated into the mystery of individual existences, fathomed the inmost depths of sentiency, followed step by step the walk of all the Tathâgatâs. Every thought cherished by the Bodhisattva now dwells in

all the Tathāgatas' abode of eternal tranquillity, and every deed practised by him is directed towards the ten *bālas* (power),¹ four *vaiśāradyas* (conviction),² and eighteen *avenikas* (unique characteristics),³ of the Buddha. By these virtues the Bodhisattva has now acquired the knowledge of all things (*sarvajñā*), is dwelling in the sanctum sanctorum of all *dhāraṇīs* and *saṁādhis*, have arrived at the summit of all activities.

¹ The ten powers of the Buddha are. (1) The mental power which discriminates between right and wrong, (2) The knowledge of the retribution of karma, (3) The knowledge of all the different stages of creation, (4) The knowledge of all the different forms of deliverance, (5) The knowledge of all the different dispositions of sentient beings, (6) The knowledge of the final destination of all deeds, (7) The knowledge of all the different practices of meditation, deliverance, and tranquilisation, (8) The knowledge of former existences, (9) The unlimited power of divination, (10) The knowledge of the complete subjection of evil desires (*āgrava*)

² The four convictions (*vaiśāradyas*) of the Buddha are: (1) That he has attained the highest enlightenment, (2) That he has destroyed all evil desires, (3) That he has rightly described the obstacles that lie in the way to a life of righteousness, (4) That he has truthfully taught the way of salvation

³ The eighteen unique characteristics which distinguish the Buddha from the rest of mankind are (1) He commits no errors. Since time out of mind, he has disciplined himself in morality, meditation, intelligence, and lovingkindness, and as the result his present life is without faults and free from all evil thoughts (2) He is faultless in his speeches. Whatever he speaks comes from his transcendental eloquence and leads the audience to a higher conception of life (3) His mind is faultless. As he has trained himself in *saṁādhi*, he is always calm, serene, and contented. (4) He retains his sameness of heart (*saṁāhitaḥṭṭā*), that is, his love for sentient beings is

The Bodhisattva at this stage is a personification of love and sympathy, which freely issue from the fount of his inner will. He gathers the clouds of virtue and wisdom, in which he manifests himself in manifold figures; he produces the lightnings of Buddhi, Vidyās, and Vaiçāradyas; and shaking the whole world with the thunder of Dharma he crushes all the evil ones; and pouring forth the showers of Good Law he quenches the burning flames of ignorance

universal and not discriminative. (5) His mind is free from thoughts of particularity (*anāstīrasamjñā*), that is, it is abiding in truth transcendental, his thoughts are not distracted by objects of the senses. (6) Resignation (*upekṣā*) The Buddha knows everything, yet he is calmly resigned. (7) His aspiration is unfathomable, that is, his desire to save all beings from the sufferings of ignorance knows no bounds. (8) His energy is inexhaustible, which he applies with utmost vigor to the salvation of benighted souls. (9) His mentation (*smṛti*) is inexhaustible, that is, he is ever conscious of all the good doctrines taught by all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. (10) His intelligence (*prajñā*) is inexhaustible, that is, being in possession of all-intelligence which knows no limits, he preaches for the benefits of all beings. (11) His deliverance (*vimukti*) is permanent, that is, he has eternally distanced all evil passions and sinful attachments. (12) His knowledge of deliverance (*vimuktyāñjana*) is perfect, that is, his intellectual insight into all states of deliverance is without a flaw. (13) He possesses a wisdom which directs all his bodily movements towards the benefit and enlightenment of sentient beings. (14) He possesses a wisdom which directs all his speeches toward the edification and conversion of his fellow-creatures. (15) He possesses a wisdom which reflects in his clear mind all the turbulent states of ignorant souls, from which he removes the dark veil of nescience and folly. (16) He knows all the past. (17) He knows all the future. (18) He knows all the present.

and passion in which all sentient creatures are being consumed.

* * *

The above presentation of the Daṣabhūmī¹ of Bodhisattvahood allows us to see what ideal life is held out by the Mahāyānists before their own eyes and in what respect it differs from that of the Ārāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas as well as from that of other religious followers. Mahāyānism is not contented to make us mere transmitters or "hearers" of the teachings of the Buddha, it wants to inspire with all the religious and ethical motives that stirred the noblest heart of Śākyamuni to its inmost depths. It fully recognises the intrinsic worth of the human soul; and, holding up its high ideals and noble aspirations, it endeavors to develop all the possibilities of our soul-life, which by our strenuous efforts and all-defying courage will one day be realised even on this earth of impermanence. We as individual existences are nothing but shadows which will vanish as soon as the conditions disappear that make them possible, we as mortal beings are no more than the

¹ For an elaborate exposition of the Daṣabhūmī, see the *Avatamsaka* (sixty volume edition, fas 24-27), the *Ārangama*, Vasubandhu's Commentary on Asanga's *Comprehensive Treatise on Mahāyānism* (fas 10-11), the *Vyākhyānamātra Śāstra* (fas. 9), etc., and for a special treatment of the subject consult the sūtra bearing the name, which by the way exists in a Sanskrit version and whose brief sketch is given by Rajendra Mitra, in his *Nepalese Buddhist Literature*, p. 81 et seq.

thousands of dusty particles that are haphazardly and powerlessly scattered about before the cyclone of karma; but when we are united in the love and intelligence of the Dharmakāya in which we have our being, we are Bodhisattvas, and we can immovably stand against the tempest of birth and death, against the overwhelming blast of ignorance. Then even an apparently insignificant act of lovingkindness will lead finally to the eternal abode of bliss, not the actor alone, but the whole community to which he belongs. Because a stream of love spontaneously flows from the lake of Intelligence-heart (*Bodhicitta*) which is fed by the inexhaustible spring of the Dharmakāya, while ignorance leads only to egoism, hatred, avarice, disturbance, and universal misery.

CHAPTER XIII.

NIRVÂNA.

NIRVÂNA, according to Mahâyâna Buddhism, is not understood in its nihilistic sense. Even with the Çrâvakas or Hinayânists, Nirvâna in this sense is not so much the object of their religious life as the recognition of the Fourfold Noble Truth, or the practise of the Eightfold Path, or emancipation from the yoke of egoism. It is mostly due, as far as I can see, to non-Buddhist critics that the conception of Nirvâna has been selected among others as one of the most fundamental teachings of Buddha, declaring it at the same time to consist in the annihilation of all human passions and aspirations, noble as well as worthless.

In fact, Nirvâna literally means "extinction" or "dissolution" of the five skandhas, and therefore it may be said that the entering into Nirvâna is tantamount to the annihilation of the material existence and of all the passions. Catholic Buddhists, however, do not understand Nirvâna in the sense of emptiness, for they say that Buddhism is not a religion of death nor for the dead, but that it teaches how to attain eternal life, how to gain an insight into the real nature of things, and how to regulate our conduct

in accordance with the highest truth. Therefore, Buddhism, when rightly understood in the spirit of its founder, is something quite different from what it is commonly supposed to be by the general public.

I will endeavor in the following pages to point out that Nirvâna in the sense of a total annihilation of human activities, is by no means the primary and sole object of Buddhists, and then proceed to elucidate its what signification it is understood in the Mahâyâna Buddhism and see what relative position Nirvâna in its Mahâyânistic sense occupies in the body of Buddhism

Nihilistic Nirvâna not the First Object.

In order to see the true signification of Nirvâna, it is necessary first to observe in what direction Buddha himself ploughed the waves in his religious cruise and upon what shore he finally debarked. This will show us whether or not Nirvâna as nihilistic nothingness is the primary and sole object of Buddhism, to which every spiritual effort of its devotees is directed.

If the attainment of negativistic Nirvâna were the sole aim of Buddhism, we should naturally expect Buddha's farewell address to be chiefly dealing with that subject. In his last sermon, however, Buddha did not teach his disciples to concentrate all their moral efforts on the attainment of Nirvânic quietude, disregarding all the forms of activity that exhibit themselves in life. Far from it. He told them, 'according to the *Mahânibbâna sutta* (the Book of the Great,

decease, *S. B. E.* Vol. XI. p. 114) that "Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence!" This exhortation of the strenuous life is quite in harmony with the last words of Buddha as recorded in Ācāvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* (Chinese translation, Chap. xxvi) They were:

"Even if I lived a kalpa longer,
Separation would be an inevitable end
A body composed of various aggregates,
Its nature is not to abide forever.

"Having finished benefiting oneself and others,
Why live I longer to no purpose?
Of gods and men that should be saved,
Each and all had been delivered.

"O ye, my disciples!
Without interruption transmit the Good Dharma!
Know ye that things are destined to decay!
Never again abandon yourselves to grief!

"But pursue the Way with diligence,
And arrive at the Home of No-separation!
I have lit the Lamp of Intelligence,
That shining dispels the darkness of the world

"Know ye that the world endureth not!
As ye should feel happy [when ye see]
The parents suffering a mortal disease
Are released by a treatment from pain,

"So with me, I now give up the vessel of misery,
Transcend ' the current of birth and death,

* Literally, "to advance against."

And am eternally released from all pain and suffering.
This too must be deemed blest.

"Ye should well guard yourselves!
Never give yourselves up to indulgence!
All that exists finally comes to an end!
I now enter into Nirvâna."¹

In this we find Buddha's characteristic admonition to his disciples not to waste time but to work out their salvation with diligence and rigor, but we fail to find the gospel of annihilation, the supposedly fundamental teaching of Buddhism.

Did then Buddha start in his religious discipline to attain the absolute annihilation of all human aspirations and after a long meditation reach the conclusion that contradicted his premises? Far from it. His first and last ambition was nothing else than the emancipation of all beings from ignorance, misery, and suffering through enlightenment, knowledge, and truth. When Mâra the evil one was exhausting all his evil powers upon the destruction of the Buddha in the beginning of his career, the good gods in the heavens exclaimed, to the evil one.²

"Take not on thyself, O Mâra, this vain fatigue,—throw aside thy malevolence and retire to thy home. This sage cannot be shaken by thee any more than the mighty mountain Meru by the wind.

¹ Cf. Beal's translation in the *S. B. E.* Vol XIX. pp. 306-307, vs 2095-2101. Beal utterly misunderstands the Chinese original.

² The *Buddhacarita*, Cowell's translation in the *S. B. E.* Vol. XLIX. p. 145.

"Even fire might lose its hot nature, water its fluidity, earth its steadiness, but never will he abandon his resolution, who has acquired his merit by a long course of actions through unnumbered eons.

"Such is the purpose of his, that heroic effort, that glorious strength, that compassion for all beings,—until he attains the highest wisdom [or suchness, *tattva*], he will never rise from his seat, just as the sun does not rise without dispelling the darkness.

"Pitying the world lying distressed amidst diseases and passions, he, the great physician, ought not to be hindered, who undergoes all his labors for the sake of the remedy-knowledge.

"He, who, when he beholds the world drowned in the great flood of existence and unable to reach the further shore, strives to bring them safely across,—would any right-minded soul offer him wrong?

"The tree of knowledge, whose roots go deep in firmness, and whose fibres are patience,—whose flowers are moral actions and whose branches are memory and thought,—and which gives out the Dharma as its fruit,—surely when it is growing it should not be cut down."

These words of the good gods in the heavens truthfully echo the motive that stirred Çakyamuni to take up his gigantic task of universal salvation, and we are unable here as before to perceive a particle of the nihilistic speculation which is supposed to characterise Nirvâna. *The Buddha from the very first of his religious course searched after the light that will illumi-

nate the whole universe and dispel the darkness of nescience.

What enlightenment, then, did the Buddha, pursuing his first object, finally gain? What truth was it that he is said to have discovered under the Bodhi tree after six years' penance and deep meditation? As is universally recognised, it was no more than the Four-fold Noble Truth and the Twelve Chains of Dependence, which are acknowledged by the Mahāyānists as well as by the Hinayānists as the essentially original teachings of the Buddha. What then was his subjective state when he discovered these truths? How did he feel in his inmost being after this intellectual triumph over egoistic thoughts and passions? According to the Southern tradition, the famous Hymn of Victory is said to be his utterance on this occasion. It reads (The *Dharmapada*, 153):

"Many a life to transmigrate,
Long quest, no rest, hath been my fate,
Tent-designer inquisitive for,
Painful birth from state to state.

"Tent-designer, I know thee now;
Never again to build art thou;
Quite out are all thy joyful fires,
Rafter broken and roof-tree gone,
Into the vast my heart goes on,
Gains Eternity—dead desires." ¹

In this Hymn of Victory, the "tent-designer" means

¹ From A. J. Edmunds's translation of *Dhammapada*.

the ego that is supposed to be a subtle existence behind our mental experiences. As was pointed out elsewhere the negative phase of Buddhism consists in the eradication of this ego-substratum or the "designer" of eternal transmigration. The Buddha now finds out that this ego-soul is a fantasmagoria and has no final existence; and with this insight his ego-centric desires that troubled him so long are eternally dead; he feels the breaking up of their limitations; he is absorbed in the Eternal Vast, in which we all live and move and have our being. No shadow is perceptible here that suggests anything of an absolute nothingness supposed to be the attribute of Nirvāna.

Before proceeding further, let us see what the Mahāyāna tradition says concerning this point. The tradition varies in this case as in many others. According to Beal's *Romantic History of Buddha*, which is a translation of a Chinese version of the *Buddhacarita* (*Fo pen hing ching*),¹ Buddha is reported to have exclaimed this

"Through ages past have I acquired continual merit,
That which my heart desired have I now attained,
How quickly have I arrived at the ever-constant condition,
And landed on the very shore of Nirvāna.
The sorrows and opposition of the world,
The Lord of the Kāmalokas, Māra Pisuna,
These are unable now to affect, they are wholly destroyed,
By the power of religious merit and of wisdom are they cast away.

¹ P. 225.² Beal's translation is not always reliable, and I would have my own if the Chinese original were at all accessible.

Let a man but persevere with unflinching resolution,
 And seek Supreme Wisdom, it will not be hard to acquire it;
 When once obtained, then farewell to all sorrows.
 All sin and guilt are forever done away."

Viewing the significance of Buddhism in this light, it is evident that Buddha did not emphasise so much the doctrine of Nirvāna in the sense of a total abnegation of human aspirations as the abandonment of egoism and the practical regulation of our daily life in accordance with this view. Nirvāna in which all the passions noble and base are supposed to have been "blown out like a lamp" was not the most coveted object of Buddhist life. On the contrary, Buddhism advises all its followers to exercise most strenuously all their spiritual energy to attain perfect freedom from the bondage of ignorance and egoism; because that is the only way in which we can conquer the vanity of worldliness and enjoy the bliss of eternal life. The following verse from the *Visuddhi Magga* (XXI) prac-

The gāthās supposed to be the first utterance of the Buddha after his enlightenment, according to Rockhill's *Life of the Buddha* (p. 33) compiled from Tibetan sources, give an inkling of nihilism, though I am inclined to think that the original Tibetan will allow a different interpretation when examined by some one who is better acquainted with the spirit of Buddhism than Rockhill. Rockhill betrays in not a few cases his insufficient knowledge of the subject he treats. His translation of the gāthās is as follows:

"All the pleasures of the worldly joys,
 All which are known among the gods,
 Compared with the joy of ending existence,
 Are not as its sixteenth part."

tically sums up the teaching of Buddhism as far as its negative, and individual phase is concerned:

- "Behold how empty is the world,
Mogharāja! In thoughtfulness
Let one remove belief in self,
And pass beyond the realm of death
The king of death will never find
The man who thus the world beholds." *

Nirvâna is Positive.

It is not my intention here to investigate the historical side of this question; we are not concerned with the problem of how the followers of Buddha gradually developed the positive aspect of Nirvâna in connection with the practical application of his moral and religious

"Sorry is he whose burden is heavy,
And happy he who has cast it down;
When once he has cast off his burden,
He will seek to be burthened no more.

} "When all existences are put away,
When all notions are at an end,
When all things are perfectly known,
Then no more will craving come back."

In the *Uddâna*, II., 2, we have a stanza corresponding to the first gâthâ here cited, but the *Uddâna* does not say "the joy of ending existence," but "the destruction of desire."

According to the *Lalitâ Vistara*, the Buddha's utterance of victory is (Rājendra Mitra's Edition p. 448):

"Cinna vartmopaçânta rajâh çuskâ âçravâ na punaḥ çra-vanti. Chinne vartmani varttate duḥkhasyaivaṣonta ucyate."

* Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*, p. 376.

teachings; nor are we engaged in tracing the process of evolution through which Buddha's noble resolution to save all sentient beings from ignorance and misery was brought out most conspicuously by his later devotees. What I wish to state here about the positive conception of Nirvāna and its development is this: The Mahāyāna Buddhism was the first religious teaching in India that contradicted the doctrine of Nirvāna as conceived by other Hindu thinkers who saw in it a complete annihilation of being, for they thought that existence is evil, and evil is misery, and the only way to escape misery is to destroy the root of existence, which is nothing less than the total cessation of human desires and activities in Nirvānic unconsciousness. The Yoga taught self-forgetfulness in deep meditation; the Samkhya, the absolute separation of Puruṣa from Prakṛti, which means undisturbed self-contemplation; the Vedānta, absorption in the Brahma, which is the total suppression of all particulars; and thus all of them considered emancipation from human desires and aspirations a heavenly bliss, that is, Nirvāna. Metaphysically speaking, they might have been correct each in its own way, but, ethically considered, their views had little significance in our practical life and showed a sad deficiency in dealing with problems of morality.

The Buddha was keenly aware of this flaw in their doctrines. He taught, therefore, that Nirvāna does not consist in the complete stoppage of existence, but in the practise of the Eightfold Path. This moral

practise leads to the unalloyed joy of Nirvāna, not as the tranquillisation of human aspirations, but as the fulfilment or unfolding of human life. The word Nirvāna in the sense of annihilation was in existence prior to Buddha, but it was he who gave a new significance to it and made it worthy of attainment by men of moral character. All the doctrinal aspects of Nirvāna are later additions or rather development made by Buddhist scholars, according to whom their arguments are solidly based on some canonical passages. Whatever the case may be, my conviction is that those who developed the positive significance of Nirvāna are more consistent with the spirit of the founder than those who emphasised another aspect of it. In the *Udāna* we read (IV., 9)

"He whom life torments not,
Who sorrows not at the approach of death,
If such a one is resolute and has seen Nirvāna,
In the midst of grief, he is griefless.
The tranquil-minded Bhikkhu, who has uprooted the
thirst for existence,
By him the succession of births is ended,
He is born no more."¹

According to the Mahāyānist conception Nirvāna is not the annihilation of the world and the putting an end to life, but it is to live in the whirlpool of birth and death and yet to be above it. It is affirmation and fulfilment, and this is done not blindly and egoistically, for Nirvāna is enlightenment. Let us see how this is.

¹General D. M. Strong's translation, p. 64

The Mahâyânistic Conception of Nirvâna.

While the conception of Nirvâna seems to have remained indefinite and confused as far as Hinayanism goes, the Mahâyâna Buddhists have attached several definite shades of meaning to Nirvâna and tried to give each of them some special, distinctive character. When it is used in its most comprehensive metaphysical sense, it becomes synonymous with Suchness (*tatva*) or with the Dharmakâya. When we speak of Buddha's entrance into Nirvâna, it means the end of material existence, i. e., death. When it is used in contrast to birth and death (*samsâra*) or to passion and sin (*klesa*), it signifies in the former case an eternal life or a state of immortality, and in the latter case a state of consciousness that follows from the recognition of the presence of the Dharmakâya in individual existences. Nirvâna has thus become a very comprehensive term, and this fact adds much to the confusion and misunderstanding with which it has been treated ever since Buddhism became known to the Occident. The so-called "primitive Buddhism" is not altogether unfamiliar with all these meanings given to Nirvâna, though in some cases they might have been but faintly foreshadowed. Most of European missionaries and scholars have ignored this fact and wanted to see in Nirvâna but one definite, stereotyped sense which will loosen or untie all the difficult knots connected with its use. One scholar would select a certain passage in a certain sūtra, where the meaning,

is tolerably distinct, and taking this as the key endeavor to solve all the rest; while another scholar would, do the same thing with another passage from the scriptures and refute other fellow-workers. The majority of them, however, have found for missionary purposes to be advantageous to hold one meaning prominently above all the others that may be considered possibly the meaning of Nirvâna. This one meaning that has been made specially conspicuous is its negativistic interpretation.

According to the *Vijñānamātra śāstra* (Chinese version Vol. X.), the Mahâyâna Buddhists distinguish four forms of Nirvâna. They are:

(1) Absolute Nirvâna, as a synonym of the *Dharmakâya*. It is eternally immaculate in its essence and constitutes the truth and reality of all existences. Though it manifests itself in the world of defilement and relativity, its essence forever remains undefiled. While it embraces in itself innumerable incomprehensible spiritual virtues, it is absolutely simple and immortal, its perfect tranquillity may be likened unto space in which every conceivable motion is possible, but which remains in itself the same. It is universally present in all beings whether animate or inanimate¹ and makes their existence real. In one respect it can be identified with them, that is, it can be pantheistically viewed; but in the other respect it is transcen-

¹ The text does not expressly say "animate or inanimate", but this is the author's own interpretation according to the general spirit of Mahâyânism

dental, for every being as it is is not Nirvāṇe. This spiritual significance is, however, beyond the ken of ordinary human understanding and can be grasped only by the highest intelligence of Buddha.

(2) Upadhīṣeṣa Nirvāṇa, or Nirvāṇa that has some residue. This is a state of enlightenment which can be attained by Buddhists in their lifetime. The Dharmakāya which was dormant in them is now awakened and freed from the "affective obstacles,"¹ but they are yet under the bondage of birth and death; and thus they are not yet absolutely free from the misery of life: something still remains in them that makes them suffer pain.

(3) Anupadhīṣeṣa Nirvāṇa, or Nirvāṇa that has no residue. This is attained when the Tathāgata-essence (the Dharmakāya) is released from the pain of birth and death as well as from the curse of passion and sin. This form of Nirvāṇa seems to be what is generally understood by Occidental missionary-scholars as the Nirvāṇa of Buddhists. While in lifetime, they have been emancipated from the egoistic conception of the soul, they have practised the Eightfold Path, and they

¹ There are two obstacles to final emancipation: (1) affective, and (2) intellectual. The former is our unenlightened affective or emotional or subjective life and the latter our intellectual prejudice. Buddhists should not only be pure in heart but be perfect in intelligence. Pious men are of course saved from transmigration, but to attain perfect Buddhahood they must have a clear, penetrating intellectual insight into the significance of life and existence and the destiny of the universe. This emphasising of the rational element in religion is one of the most characteristic points of Buddhism.

have destroyed all the roots of karma that makes possible their metempsychosis in the world of birth and death (*samsâra*), though as the inevitable sequence of their previous karma they have yet to suffer all the evils inherent in the material existence. But at last they have had even this mortal coil dissolved away, and have returned to the original Absolute from which by virtue of ignorance they had come out and gone through a cycle of births and deaths. This state of supramundane bliss in the realm of the Absolute is Anupadiṣṣa Nirvâna, that is, Nirvâna that has no residue.

(4) The Nirvâna that has no abode. In this, the Buddha-essence has not only been freed from the curse of passion and sin (*kleṣa*), but from the intellectual prejudice, which most tenaciously clings to the mind. The Buddha-essence or the Dharmakâya is revealed here in its perfect purity. All-embracing love and all-knowing intelligence illuminate the path. He who has attained to this state of subjective enlightenment is said to have no abode, no dwelling place, that is to say, he is no more subject to the transmigration of birth and death (*samsâra*), nor does he cling to Nirvâna as the abode of complete rest, in short, he is above Samsâra and Nirvâna. His sole object in life is to benefit all sentient beings to the end of time, but this he proposes to do not by his human conscious elaboration and striving. Simply actuated by his all-embracing love which is of the Dharmakâya, he wishes to deliver all his fellow-creatures from misery, he does

not seek his own emancipation from the turmoil of life. He is fully aware of the transitoriness of worldly interests, but on this account he desires not to shun them. With his all-knowing intelligence he gains a spiritual insight into the ultimate nature of things and the final course of existence. He is one of those religious men "that weep, as though they wept not; that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; that buy, as though they possessed not; that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passes away." Nay, he is in one sense more than this; his life is full of positive activity, because his heart and soul are devoted to the leading of all beings to final emancipation and supreme bliss. When a man attains to this stage of spiritual life, he is said to be in the Nirvâna that has no abode.

A commentator on the *Vijñānamātra Śāstra* adds that of these four forms of Nirvâna the first is possessed by every sentient being, whether it is actualised in its human perfection or lying dormant *in posse* and miserably obscured by ignorance; that the second and third are attained by all the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, while it is a Buddha alone that is in possession of all the four forms of Nirvâna.

Nirvâna as the Dharmakāya.

It is manifest from the above statement that in Mahâyānism Nirvâna has acquired several shades of meaning psychological and ontological. This apparent confusion, however, is due to the purely idealistic

tendency of Mahāyānism, which ignores the distinction usually made between being and thought, object and subject, the perceived and the perceiving. Nirvāna is not only a subjective state of enlightenment but an objective power through whose operation this beatific state becomes attainable. It does not simply mean a total absorption in the Absolute or of emancipation from earthly desires in lifetime as exemplified in the life of the Arhat Mahāyānists perceive in Nirvāna not only this, but also its identity with the Dharmakāya, or Suchness, and recognise its universal spiritual presence in all sentient beings.

When Nāgārjuna says in his *Mādhyamika Śāstra*¹ that: "That is called Nirvāna which is not wanting, is not acquired, is not intermittent, is not non-intermittent, is not subject to destruction, and is not created;" he evidently speaks of Nirvāna as a synonym of Dharmakāya, that is, in its first sense as above described. Chandra Kirti, therefore, rightly comments that Nirvāna is *sarva-kalpanā-kṣaya-rūpam*,² i. e., that which transcends all the forms of determination.

¹ This is one of the most important philosophical texts of Mahāyānism. Its original Sanskrit with the commentary of Chandra Kirti has been edited by Satish Chandra Acharya and published by the Buddhist Text Society of India. The original lines run as follows (p. 193):

"Aprahinam, asamprāptam, anucchinnaṃ, aśāṣvatam,
Aniruddham, anutpannam, evaṃ nirvānam ucyate"

² Literally, that which is characterised by the absence of all characterisation.

Nirvāna is an absolute, it is above the relativity of existence (*bhāva*) and non-existence (*abhāva*) *

Nirvāna is sometimes spoken of as possessing four attributes; (1) eternal (*nitya*), (2) blissful (*sukha*), (3) self-acting (*ātman*), and (4) pure (*śuci*). Judging from these qualities thus ascribed to Nirvāna as its essential features, Nirvāna is here again identified with the highest reality of Buddhism, that is, with the Dharmakāya. It is eternal because it is immaterial; it is blissful because it is above all sufferings; it is self-acting because it knows no compulsion; it is pure because it is not defiled by passion and error. †

* Cf. the following from the *Middhyamika*:

"Bhaved abbāvo bhāvaḥ ca nirvānam ubhayam katham:
Asamskṛtam ca nirvānam bhāvābhavāi ca samskṛtam."

Or, "Tasmānna bhāvo nābhāvo nirvānamiti yujyate "

† In the *Vissuddhi-Magga* XXI. (Warren's translation, p. 376 et seq.), we read that there are three starting points of deliverance arising from the consideration of the three predominant qualities of the constituents of being: 1. The consideration of their beginnings and ends leads the thoughts to the unconditioned; 2. The insight into their miserableness agitates the mind and leads the thoughts to the desireless; 3. The consideration of the constituents of being as not having an ego leads the thoughts to the empty. And these three, we are told, constitute the three aspects of Nirvāna as unconditioned, desireless, and empty. Here we have an instance in the so-called Southern "primitive" Buddhism of viewing Nirvāna in the Mahāyānist light which I have here explained at length.

En passant, let us remark that as Buddha did not leave any document himself embodying his whole system, there sprang up soon after his departure several schools explaining

Nirvāna in its Fourth Sense.

No further elucidation is needed for the first signification of Nirvāna, for we have treated it already when explaining the nature of the Dharmakāya. Nor is it necessary for us to dwell upon the second and the third phases of it. The Occidental missionary-scholars and Orientalists, however one-sided and often biased, have almost exhaustively investigated these points from the Pāli sources. What remains for us now is to analyse the Mahāyānist conception of Nirvāna which was stated above as its fourth signification.

Nirvāna, briefly speaking, is a realisation in this life of the all-embracing love and all-knowing intelligence of Dharmakāya. It is the unfolding of the reason of existence, which in the ordinary human life remains more or less eclipsed by the shadow of ignorance and egoism. It does not consist in the mere observance of the moral precepts laid down by Buddha, nor in the blind following of the Eightfold Path, nor in retirement from the world and absorption in abstract meditation. The Mahāyānist Nirvāna is full of energy and activity which issues from the all-embracing love of the Dharmakāya. There is no passivity in it, nor a keeping aloof from the hurly-burly of worldliness.

the Master's view in divers ways, each claiming the legitimate interpretation, that in view of this fact it is illogical to conclude that Southern Buddhism is the authoritative representation par excellence of original Buddhism, while the Eastern or the Northern is a mere degeneration

He who is in this Nirvāna does not seek a rest in the annihilation of human aspirations, does not flinch in the face of endless transmigration. On the contrary, he plunges himself into the ever-rushing current of Samsāra and sacrifices himself to save his fellow-creatures from being eternally drowned in it.

Though thus the Mahāyāna Nirvāna is realised only in the mire of passions and errors, it is never contaminated by the filth of ignorance. Therefore, he that is abiding in Nirvāna, even in the whirlpool of egoism and in the darkness of sin, does not lose his all-seeing insight that penetrates deep into the ultimate nature of being. He is aware of the transitoriness of things. He knows that this life is a mere passing moment in the eternal manifestation of the Dharmakāya, whose work can be realised only in boundless space and endless time. As he is fully awake to this knowledge, he never gets engrossed in the world of sin. He lives in the world like unto the lotus-flower, the emblem of immaculacy, which grows out of the mire and yet shares not its defilement. He is also like unto a bird flying in the air that does not leave any trace behind it. He may again be likened unto the clouds that spontaneously gather around the mountain peak, and, soaring high as the wind blows, vanish away to the region where nobody knows. In short, he is living in, and yet beyond, the realm of Samsāra and Nirvāna.

We read in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (chap. VIII):

"Vimalakīrti asks Mañjuçrī: 'How is it that you

declare all [human] passions and errors are the seeds of Buddhahood?"

"Mañjuçri replies: 'O son of good family! Those who cling to the view of non-activity [*asamskrita*] and dwell in a state of eternal annihilation do not awaken in them supremely perfect knowledge [*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*]. Only the Bodhisattvas, who dwell in the midst of passions and errors, and who, passing through the [ten] stages, rightly contemplate the ultimate nature of things, are able to awaken and attain intelligence [*prajñā*].

"Just as the lotus-flowers do not grow in the dry land, but in the dark-colored, waterly mire, O son of good family, it is even so [with intelligence (*prajñā* or *bodhi*)]. In non-activity and eternal annihilation which are cherished by the Ārāvakas and the Pratyekabuddhas, there is no opportunity for the seeds and sprouts of Buddhahood to grow. Intelligence can grow only in the mire and dirt of passion and sin. It is by virtue of passion and sin that the seeds and sprouts of Buddhahood are able to grow.

"O son of good family! Just as no seeds can grow in the air, but in the filthy, muddy soil,—and there even luxuriously,—O son of good family, it is even so [with the Bodhi]. It does not grow out of non-activity and eternal annihilation. It is only out of the mountainous masses of egoistic, selfish thoughts that Intelligence is awakened and grows to the incomprehensible wisdom of Buddha-seeds.

"O son of good family! Just as we cannot ob-

tain priceless pearls unless we dive into the depths of the four great oceans, O son of good family, it is even so [with Intelligence] If we do not dive deep into the mighty ocean of passion and sin, how could we get hold of the precious gem of Buddha-essence? Let it therefore be understood that the primordial seeds of Intelligence draw their vitality from the midst of passion and sin.' " In a Pauline epistle we read, "From the foulness of the soil, the beauty of new life grows." And Emerson sings :

"Let me go where'er I will,
I hear a sky-born music still.
'Tis not in the high stars alone,
Nor in the cup of budding flowers,
Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,
Nor in the bow that smiles in showers,
But in the mud and scum of things.
There always, always, something sings "

Do we not see here a most explicit statement of the Mahâyânistic sentiment?

Nirvâna and Samsâra are One.

The most remarkable feature in the Mahâyânistic conception of Nirvâna is expressed in this formula: "Yas kleṣas so bodhi, yas saṃsâras tat nirvânam." What is sin or passion, that is Intelligence, what is birth and death (or transmigration), that is Nirvâna. This is a rather bold and revolutionising proposition in the dogmatic history of Buddhism. But it is no more than the natural development of the spirit that was breathed by its founder.

In the *Vīṣeṣacinta-brahma-paripṛcchā Sūtra*,¹ it is said that (chap. II):

"Samsāra is Nirvāna, because there is, when viewed from the ultimate nature of the Dharmakāya, nothing going out of, nor coming into, existence, [samsāra being only apparent]: Nirvāna is samsāra, when it is coveted and adhered to."

In another place (*op. cit.*) the idea is expressed in much plainer terms: "The essence of all things is in truth free from attachment, attributes, and desires; therefore, they are pure, and, as they are pure, we know that what is the essence of birth and death that is the essence of Nirvāna, and that what is the essence of Nirvāna that is the essence of birth and death (*samsāra*). In other words, Nirvāna is not to be sought outside of this world, which, though transient, is in reality no more than Nirvāna itself. Because it is contrary to our reason to imagine that there is Nirvāna and there is birth and death (*samsāra*), and that the one lies outside the pale of the other, and, therefore, that we can attain Nirvāna only after we have annihilated or escaped the world of birth and death. If we are not hampered by our confused subjectivity, this our worldly life is an activity of Nirvāna itself."

Nāgārjuna repeats the same sentiment in his *Mādhyamika Śāstra*, when he says:

¹ There are three Chinese translations of this Mahāyāna text, by Dharmarakṣa, Kumārajīva, and Bodhiruci, between 265 and 517 A. D.

"Samsāra is in no way to be distinguished from Nirvāna:
Nirvāna is in no way to be distinguished from Samsāra."

Or,

"The sphere of Nirvāna is the sphere of Samsāra:
Not the slightest distinction exists between them."

Asanga goes a step further and boldly declares that all the Buddha-dharmas, of which Nirvāna or Dharmakāya forms the foundation, are characterised with the passions, errors, and sins of vulgar minds. He says in *Mahāyāna-Saṅgraha Śāstra* (the Chinese Tripitaka, Japanese edition of 1881, *wang* VIII., p. 84):

"(1) All Buddha-dharmas are characterised with eternality, for the Dharmakāya is eternal.

"(2) All Buddha-dharmas are characterised with an extinguishing power, for they extinguish all the obstacles for final emancipation.

"(3) All Buddha-dharmas are characterised with regeneration, for the Nirmānakāya [Body of Transformation] constantly regenerates.

"(4) All Buddha-dharmas are characterised with the power of attainment, for by the attainment [of truth] they subjugate innumerable evil passions as cherished by ignorant beings.

"(5) All Buddha-dharmas are characterised with the desire to gain, ill humor, folly, and all the other

† Samsārasya ca nirvānāt kincid asti viśeṣaṇam
Na nirvāṇasya samsārāt kincid asti viśeṣaṇam.

* Nirvāṇasya ca yā kotih kotih samsārasya ca,
Vidyādanantaram kincit susukṣmam vidyate

passions of vulgar minds, for it is through the Buddha's love that those depraved souls are saved.

"(6) All Buddha-dharmas are characterised with non-attachment and non-defilement, for Suchness which is made perfect by these virtues cannot be defiled by any evil powers

"(7) All Buddha-dharmas are above attachment and defilement, for though all Buddhas reveal themselves in the world, worldliness cannot defile them."¹

Buddha-dharma means any thing, or any virtue, or any faculty, that belongs to Buddhahood. Non-attachment is a Buddha-dharma, love is a Buddha-dharma, wisdom is a Buddha-dharma, and in fact anything is a Buddha-dharma which is an attribute of the Perfect One, not to mention the Dharmakāya or Nirvāna which constitutes the very essence of Buddhahood. Therefore, the conclusion which is to be drawn from those seven propositions of Asanga as above quoted is this: Not only is this world of constant transformation as a whole Nirvāna, but its apparent errors and sins and evils are also the various phases of the manifestation of Nirvāna

The above being the Mahāyānist view of Nirvāna, it is evident that Nirvāna is not something transcendental or that which stands above this world of birth

¹ Concerning the similarity in meaning of this statement to the one just preceding, a commentator says that the sixth is the statical view of Suchness (or Dharmakāya) and the seventh its dynamical view. One explains what the highest reality of Buddhism is and the other what it does or works.

and death, joy and sorrow, love and hate, peace and struggle. Nirvâna is not to be sought in the heavens nor after a departure from this earthly life nor in the annihilation of human passions and aspirations. On the contrary, it must be sought in the midst of worldliness, as life with all its thrills of pain and pleasure is no more than Nirvâna itself. Extinguish your life and seek Nirvâna in anchoretism, and your Nirvâna is forever lost. Consign your aspirations, hopes, pleasures, and woes, and everything that makes up a life to the eternal silence of the grave, and you bury Nirvâna never to be recovered. In asceticism, or in meditation, or in ritualism, or even in metaphysics, the more impetuously you pursue Nirvâna, the further away it flies from you. It was the most serious mistake ever committed by any religious thinkers to imagine that Nirvâna which is the complete satisfaction of our religious feeling could be gained by laying aside all human desires, ambitions, hopes, pains, and pleasures. Have your own Bodhi (intelligence) thoroughly enlightened through love and knowledge, and everything that was thought sinful and filthy turns out to be of divine purity. It is the same human heart, formerly the fount of ignorance and egoism, now the abode of eternal beatitude — Nirvâna shining in its intrinsic magnificence.

Suppose a torch light is taken into a dark cell, which people had hitherto imagined to be the abode of hideous, uncanny goblins, and which on that account they wanted to have completely destroyed to the

ground. The bright light now ushered in at once disperses the darkness, and every nook and corner therein, is perfectly illumined. Everything in it now assumes its proper aspect. And to their surprise people find that those figures which they formerly considered to be uncanny and horrible are nothing but huge precious stones, and they further learn that every one of those stones can be used in some way for the great benefit of their fellow-creatures. The dark cell is the human heart before the enlightenment of Nirvâna, the torch light is love and intelligence. When love warms and intelligence brightens, the heart finds every passion and sinful desire that was the cause of unbearable anguish now turned into a divine aspiration. The heart itself, however, remains the same just as much as the cell, whose identity was never affected either by darkness or by brightness. This parable nicely illustrates the Mahâyânistic doctrine of the identity of Nirvâna and Samsâra, and of the Bodhi and Kleça, that is, of intelligence and passion.

Therefore, it is said:

"All sins transformed into the constituents of enlightenment!
The vicissitudes of Samsâra transformed into the beatitude
of Nirvâna!

All these come from the exercise of the great religious
discipline (*upâya*),

Beyond our understanding, indeed, is the mystery of all
Buddhas " 1

1 *The Discourse on Buddha-essence* by Vasubandhu. The Japanese Tripitaka edition of 1881, fasc. II., p. 84, where the stanza is quoted from the *Sûtra on the Incomprehensible*.

The Middle Course.

In one sense the Buddha always showed an eclectic, conciliatory, synthetic spirit in his teachings. He refused to listen to any extreme doctrine which elevates one end too high at the expense of the other and culminates in the collapse of the whole edifice. When the Buddha left his seat of enlightenment under the Bôdhi tree, he made it his mission to avoid both extremes, asceticism and hedonism. He proved throughout his life to be a calm, dignified, thoughtful, well-disciplined person, and at no time irritable in character, — in this latter respect being so different from the sage of Nazareth, who in anger cast out all the tradesmen in the temple and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and who cursed the fig tree on which he could not find any fruit but leaves unfit to appease his hunger. The doctrine of the Middle Path (*Mâdhyamârga*), whatever it may mean morally and intellectually, always characterised the life and doctrine of Buddha as well as the later development of his teachings. His followers, however different in their individual views, professed as a rule to pursue steadily the Middle Path as paved by the Master. 'Even when Nâgârjuna proclaimed his celebrated doctrine of Eight No's which seems to superficial critics nothing but an absolute nihilism, he said that the Middle Path could be found only in those eight no's.'

¹This is expressed in the first verse of the *Mâdhyamika Śāstra*, which runs as follows:

Mahāyānism has certainly applied this synthetic method of Buddha to its theory of Nirvāna and ennobled it by fully developing its immanent signification. In the *Discourse on Buddha-essence*, Vasubandhu quotes the following passage from the *Grimala Sūtra*, which plainly shows the path along which the Mahāyānists traveled before they reached their final conclusion: "Those who see only the transitoriness of existence are called nihilists, and those who see only the eternality of Nirvāna are called eternalists. Both views are incorrect." Vasubandhu then proceeds to say: "Therefore, the Dharmakāya of the Tathāgata is free from both extremes, and on that account it is called the Great Eternal Perfection. When viewed from this absolute standpoint of Suchness, the logical distinction between Nirvāna and Samsāra cannot in reality be maintained, and hereby we enter upon the realm of non-duality." And this realm of non-duality is the Middle Path of Nirvāna, not in its nihilistic, but in its Mahāyānistic, significance

How to Realise Nirvāna.

How can we attain the Middle Path of Nirvāna? How can we realise a life that is neither pessimistic asceticism nor materialistic hedonism? How can we steer through the whirlpools of Samsāra without being

"Anirodham anutpādam anucchedam açāvatam
Anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam."

Literally translated these lines read

"No annihilation, no production, no destruction, no persistence,
No unity, no plurality, no coming in, no going out."

swallowed up and yet braving their turbulent gyration? The answer to this can readily be given, when we understand, as repeatedly stated above, that this life is the *manifestation of the Dharmakāya*, and that the ideal of human existence is to realise within the possibilities of his mind and body all that he can conceive of the Dharmakāya. And this we have found to be all-embracing love and all-seeing intelligence. Destroy then your ignorance at one blow and be done with your egoism, and there springs forth an eternal stream of love and wisdom.

Says Vasubandhu: "By virtue of Prajñā [intelligence or wisdom], our egoistic thoughts are destroyed: by virtue of Karuṇā [love], altruistic thoughts are cherished. By virtue of Prajñā, the [affective] attachment inherent in vulgar minds is abolished; by virtue of Karuṇā, the [intellectual] attachment as possessed by the Ārāyikas and Pratyekabuddhas is abolished. By virtue of Prajñā, Nirvāṇa [in its transcendental sense] is not rejected; by virtue of Karuṇā, Samsāra [with its changes and transmigrations] is not rejected. By virtue of Prajñā the truth of Buddhism is attained; by virtue of Karuṇā, all sentient beings are matured [for salvation]."

The practical life of a Buddhist runs in two opposite, though not antagonistic, directions, one upward and the other downward, and the two are synthesised in the Middle Path of Nirvāṇa. The upward direction points to the intellectual comprehension of the truth, while the downward one to a realisation of all-embracing

cing love among his fellow-creatures. One is complemented by the other. When the intellectual side is too much emphasised at the expense of the emotional, we have a Pratyekabuddha, a solitary thinker, whose fountain of tears is dry and does not flow over the sufferings of his fellow-beings. When the emotional side alone is asserted to the extreme, love acquires the egoistic tint that colors everything coming in contact with it. Because it does not discriminate and takes sensuality for spirituality. If it does not turn out sentimentalism, it will assume a hedonistic form. How many superstitious, or foul, or even atrocious deeds in the history of religion have been committed under the beautiful name of religion, or love of God and mankind! It makes the blood run cold when we think how religious fanatics burned alive their rivals or opponents at the stake, cruelly butchered thousands of human lives within a day, brought desolation and ruin throughout the land of their enemies, — and all these works of the Devil executed for sheer love of God! Therefore, says Devala, the author of the *Discourse on the Mahāpuruṣa* (Great Man) "The wise do not approve lovingkindness without intelligence, nor do they approve intelligence without lovingkindness; because one without the other prevents us from reaching the highest path." Knowledge is the eye, love is the limb. Directed by the eye, the limb knows how to move; furnished with the limb, the eye can attain what it perceives. Love alone is blind, knowledge alone is lame. It is only when one is supplement-

ed by the other that we have a perfect, complete man.

In Buddha as the ideal human being we recognise the perfection of love and intelligence; for it was in him that the Dharmakāya found its perfect realisation in the flesh. But as far as the Bodhisattvas are concerned, their natural endowments are so diversified and their temperament is so uneven that in some the intellectual elements are more predominant while in others the emotional side is more pronounced, that while some are more prone to practicality others preferably look toward intellectualism. Thus, as a matter of course, some Bodhisattvas will be more of philosophers than of religious seers. They may tend in some cases to emphasise the intellectual side of religion more than its emotional side and uphold the importance of *prajñā* (intelligence) above that of *karuṇā* (love). But the Middle Path of Nirvāna lies in the true harmonisation of *prajñā* and *karuṇā*, of *bodhi* and *upāya*, of knowledge and love, of intellect and feeling.

Love Awakens Intelligence

But if we have to choose between the two, let us first have all-embracing love, the Buddhists would say; for it is love that awakens in us an intense desire to find the way of emancipating the masses from perpetual sufferings and eternal transmigration. The intellect will now endeavor to realise its highest possibilities; the *Bodhi* will exhibit its fullest strength. When it is found out that this life is an expression of the Dharmakāya which is one and eternal, that

individual existences have no selfhood (*âtman* or *svadhâva*) as far as they are due to the particularisation of subjective ignorance, and, therefore, that we are true and real only when we are conceived as one in the absolute Dharmakâya, the Bodhisattva's love which caused him to search after the highest truth will now unfold its fullest significance.

- This love, or faith in the Mahâyâna, as it is sometimes called, is felt rather vaguely at the first awakening of the religious consciousness, and agitates the mind of the aspirant, whose life has hitherto been engrossed in every form of egocentric thought and desire. He no more finds an unalloyed satisfaction, as the Çrâvakas or the Pratyekabuddhas do, in his individual emancipation from the curse of Samsâra. However sweet the taste of release from the bond of ignorance, it is lacking something that makes the freedom perfectly agreeable to the Bodhisattva who thinks more of others than of himself; to be sweet as well as acceptable, it must be highly savored with lovingkindness which embraces all his fellow-beings as his own children. The emancipation of the Çrāvaka or of the Pratyekabuddha is like a delicious food which is wanting in saline taste, for it is no more than a dry, formal philosophical emancipation. Love is that which stimulates a man to go beyond his own interests. It is the mother of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The sacred motive that induces them to renounce a life of Nirvânic self-complacency, is nothing but their boundless love for all beings. They do

not wish to rest in their individual emancipation, they want to have all sentient creatures without a single exception emancipated and blest in paradisiacal happiness. Love, therefore, bestows on us two spiritual benefits: (1) It saves all beings from misery and (2) awakens in us the Buddha-intelligence

The following passages quoted at random from Devala's *Mahāpuruṣa* will help our readers to understand the true signification of Nirvāna and the value of love (*karuṇā*) as estimated by the Mahāyānists.

"Those who are afraid of transmigration and seek their own benefits and happiness in final emancipation, are not at all comparable to those Bodhisattvas, who rejoice when they come to assume a material existence once again, for it affords them another opportunity to benefit others. Those who are only capable of feeling their own selfish sufferings may enter into Nirvāna [and not trouble themselves with the sufferings of other creatures like themselves]; but the Bodhisattva who feels in himself all the sufferings of his fellow-beings as his own, how can he bear the thought of leaving others behind while he is on his way to final emancipation, and when he himself is resting in Nirvānic quietude?..... Nirvāna in truth consists in rejoicing at other's being made happy, and Samsāra in not so feeling. He who feels a universal love for his fellow-creatures will rejoice in distributing blessings among them and find his Nirvāna in so doing.¹

¹ Compare this Buddhist sentiment of universal love with that of the Christian religion and we shall see the truth that

"Suffering really consists in pursuing one's egotistic happiness, while Nirvāna is found in sacrificing one's welfare for the sake of others. People generally think that it is an emancipation when they are released from their own pain, but a man with loving heart finds it in rescuing others from misery.

"With people who are not kindhearted, there is no sin that will not be committed by them. They are called the most wicked whose hearts are not softened at the sight of others, misfortune and suffering.

"When all beings are tortured by avarice, passion, ill humor, infatuation, and folly, and are constantly threatened by the misery of birth and death, disease and decay. . . . how can the Bodhisattva live among them and not feel pity for them?

"Of all good virtues, lovingkindness stands foremost. . . . It is the source of all merit . . . It is the

all religions are one at the bottom. We read in Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* (ch XIII) "My son, I descended from heaven for thy salvation; I took upon me thy sorrows, not necessity but love drawing me thereto; that thou thyself mightest learn patience and bear temporal sufferings without repining For from the hour of my birth, even until my death on the cross, I was not without suffering of grief" This is exactly the sentiment that stimulates the Bodhisattvas to their gigantic task of universal salvation. Those who are free from sectarian biases will admit without hesitation that there is but one true religion which may assume various forms according to circumstances. "Many are the roads to the summit, but when reached there we have but one universal

mother of all Buddhas. . . It induces others to take refuge in the incomparable Bodhi.

"The loving heart of a Bodhisattva is annoyed by one thing, that all beings are constantly tortured and threatened by all sorts of pain."

Let us quote another interesting passage from a Mahāyāna sūtra.

When Vimalakirti was asked why he did not feel well, he made the following reply, which is full of religious significance: "From ignorance there arises desire and that is the cause of my illness. As all sentient beings are ill, so am I ill. When all sentient beings are healed of their illness, I shall be healed of my illness, too. Why? The Bodhisattva suffers birth and death because of sentient beings. As there is birth and death, so there is illness. When sentient beings are delivered from illness, the Bodhisattvas will suffer no more illness. When an only son in a good family is sick, the parents feel sick, too: when he is recovered they are well again. So it is with the Bodhisattva. He loves all sentient beings as his own children. When they are sick, he is sick too. When they are recovered, he is well again. Do you wish to know whence this [sympathetic] illness is? The illness of the Bodhisattva comes from his all-embracing love (*mahākaraṇā*)."

This gospel of universal love is the consummation of all religious emotions whatever their origin. Without this, there is no religion — that is, no religion that is animated with life and spirit. For it is in the fact

and nature of things that we are not moved by mere contemplation or mere philosophising. Every religion may have its own way of intellectually interpreting this fact, but the practical result remains the same everywhere, viz that it cannot survive without the animating energy of love. Whatever sound and fine reasoning there may be in the doctrine of the Ārāvaka and the Pratyekabuddha, the force that is destined to conquer the world and to deliver us from misery is not intellection, but the will, i. e. the pūrvapranidhāna of the Dharmakāya.

Conclusion.

We now conclude. What is most evident from what we have seen above is that the Mahāyāna Nirvāna is not the annihilation of life but its enlightenment, that it is not the nullification of human passions and aspirations but their purification and ennoblement. This world of eternal transmigration is not a place which should be shunned as the playground of evils, but should be regarded as the place of ever-present opportunities given to us for the purpose of unfolding all our spiritual possibilities and powers for the sake of the universal welfare. There is no need for us to shrink, like the snail into his cozy shelter, before the duties and burdens of life. The Bodhisattva, on the contrary, finds Nirvāna in a concatenation of births and deaths and boldly faces the problem of evil, and solves it by purifying the Bodhi from subjective ignorance.

His rule of conduct is:

"Sabbha pāpassa akaranam,
Kusalassa upasampada,
Sacitta pariyoḍapanam;
Etam buddhāṇu sāsanaṃ."

His aspirations are solemnly expressed in this, which we hear daily recited in the Mahāyāna Buddhist temples and monasteries and seminaries:

"Sentient beings, however innumerable, I take vow to save;
Evil passions, however inextinguishable, I take vow to destroy;
The avenues of truth, however numberless, I take vow to study;
The way of the Enlightened, however unsurpassable, I take
vow to attain."

And an indefatigable pursuit of these noble aims will finally lead to the heaven of the Buddhists, Nirvāṇa, which is not a state of eternal quietude, but the source of energy and intelligence.

By way of summary, and to avoid all misconceptions, let me repeat once more that Nirvāṇa is thus no negation of life, nor is it an idle contemplation on the misery of existence. The life of a Buddhist consists by no means in the monotonous repetition of reciting the sūtras and going his rounds for meals. Far from that. He enters into all the forms of life-activity, for he does not believe that universal emanci-

¹ The *Dharmaśāstra*, XIV 5. Mr. A. J. Edmunds's translation is,

"Ceasing to do all wrong,
Initiation into goodness,
Cleansing the heart:
This the religion of the Buddhas."

ipation, is achieved by imprisoning himself in the cloister.

Theoretically speaking, Nirvāna is the dispersion of the clouds of ignorance hovering around the light of Bodhi. Morally, it is the suppression of egoism and the awakening of love (*karuṇā*). Religiously, it is the absolute surrender of the self to the will of the Dharmakāya. When the clouds of ignorance are dispersing, our intellectual horizon gets clearer and wider; we perceive that our individual existences are like bubbles and lightnings, but that they obtain reality in their oneness with the Body of Dharma. This conviction compels us to eternally abandon our old egoistic conception of life. The ego finds its significance only when it is conceived in relation to the not-ego, that is, to the *alter*, in other words, self-love has no meaning whatever unless it is purified by love for others. But this love for others must not remain blind and unenlightened, it must be in harmony with the will of the Dharmakāya which is the norm of existence and the reason of being. The mission of love is ennobled and fulfilled in its true sense when we come to the faith that says "thy will be done." Love without this resignation to the divine ordinance is merely another form of egoism: the root is already rotten, how can its trunk, stems, leaves, and flowers make a veritable growth?

Let us then conclude with the following reflections of the Bōdhisattva, in which we read the whole signification of Buddhism.

"Having practised all the six virtues of perfection (*pāramitā*) and innumerable other meritorious deeds, the Bodhisattva reflects in this wise:

"'All the good deeds practised by me are for the benefit of all sentient beings, for their ultimate purification [from sin]. By the merit of these good deeds I pray that all sentient beings be released from the innumerable sufferings suffered by them in their various abodes of existence. By the turning over (*parivarta*) of these deeds I would be a haven for all beings and deliver them from their miserable existences; I would be a great beacon-light to all beings and dispel the darkness of ignorance and make the light of intelligence shine.'

"He reflects again in this wise:

"'All sentient beings are creating evil karma in innumerable ways, and by reason of this karma they suffer innumerable sufferings. They do not recognise the Tathāgata, do not listen to the Good Law, do not pay homage to the congregation of holy men. All these beings carry an innumerable amount of great evil karma and are destined to suffer in innumerable ways. For their sake I will in the midst of the three evil creations suffer all their sufferings and deliver every one of them. Painful as these sufferings are, I will not retreat, I will not be frightened, I will not be negligent, I will not forsake my fellow-beings. Why? Because it is the will [of the *Dharmakāya*] that all sentient beings should be universally emancipated.'

"He reflects again in this wise:

"My conduct will be like the sun-god who with his universal illumination seeks not any reward, who ceases not on account of one unrighteous person to make a great display of his magnificent glory, who on account of one unrighteous person abandons not the salvation of all beings. Through the dedication (*parivarta*) of all my merits I would make every one of my fellow-creatures happy and joyous.'" (The *Avatamsaka Sûtra*, fasc XIV).

APPENDIX

,

HYMNS OF MAHÂYÂNA FAITH.

DHARMAKÂYA (TATHÂGATA).¹

In all beings there abideth the Dharmakâya;
With all virtues dissolved in it, it liveth in eternal
calmness.

It knoweth nor birth nor death, coming nor going;
Not one, not two; not being, not becoming;
Yet present everywhere in worlds of beings:
This is what is perceived by all Tathâgatas.
All virtues, material and immaterial,
Dependent on the Dharmakâya, are eternally pure in it.

Like unto the sky is the ultimate nature of the Dhar-
makâya;

Far away from the six dusts, it is defilement-free.
Of no form and devoid of all attributes is the Dhar-
makâya,

In which are void both actor and action:
The Dharmakâya of all Buddhas, thus beyond com-
prehension,

Quells all the struggles of sophistry and dialectics,
Distances all the efforts of intellection,
Thoughts all are dead in it, and suchness alone abideth.

THE DHARMAKĀYA OF TATHĀGATA²

In all the worlds over the ten quarters,
 O ye, sentient creatures living there,
 Behold the most venerable of men and gods,
 Whose spiritual 'Dharma-body is immaculate and pure

As through the power of one mind,
 A host of thoughts is evolved
 So from one Dharma body of Tathāgata,
 Are produced all the Buddha-bodies

In Bodhi nothing dual there existeth,
 Nor is any thought of self present
 The Dharma body, undefiled and non dual,
 In its full splendor manifesteth itself everywhere

Its ultimate reality is like unto the vastness of space,
 Its manifested forms are like unto magic shows,
 Its virtues excellent are inexhaustible,
 This, indeed the spiritual state of Buddhas only

All the Buddhas of the present, past, and future,
 Each one of them is an issue of the Dharma body
 immaculate and pure,
 Responding to the needs of sentient creatures,
 They manifest themselves everywhere, assuming corporeality which is beautiful

They never made the premeditation
 That they would manifest in such and such forms
 Separated are they from all desire and anxiety,
 And free and self acting are their responses

They do not negate the phenomenality of dharmas,
 Nor do they affirm the world of individuals:
 But manifesting themselves in all forms,
 They teach and convert all sentient creatures

The Dharma-body is not changeable,
 Neither is it unchangeable;
 All dharmas [in essence] are without change,
 But manifestations are changeable.

The Sambodhi knoweth no bounds,
 Extending as far as the limits of the Dharmaloka itself;
 Its depths are bottomless, and its extent limitless,
 Words and speeches are powerless to describe it.

Of all the ways that lead to Enlightenment
 The Tathâgata knoweth the true significance;
 Wandering freely all over the worlds,
 Obstacles he encountereth nowhere.

THE TATHÂGATA. (1) ³

The Tathâgata appeared not on earth,
 Nor did he enter into Nirvana;
 By the supreme power of his inmost will,
 He reveals himself freely as he wills *

This fact is beyond comprehension,
 Belongs not to the sphere of a limited consciousness,
 Only an intelligence perfect and gone beyond
 Is able to have an insight into the realm of Buddhas

The material body is not the Tathāgata,
Nor is the voice, nor the sound
Yet he is not beyond the visible and the audible
The Buddha has indeed a power miraculous

People of little faith are unable to know
The inmost adytum of Buddhahood
It is by the perfecting of primordial karma intelligence
That the realm of all Buddhas is revealed.

All Buddhas come from nowhere,
And depart for nowhere
The Body of Dharma that is pure, immaculate, and
incomprehensible,
Is invested with a power miraculously free

In infinity of worlds,
Revealing itself in the body of Tathagata,
It universally preaches the Law supremely excellent,
And in its heart no attachment lingers

An intellect that knows no limits or bounds
Perceives no obstacles in all dharmas,
And penetrates into the depths of the Dharmaloka,
Revealing itself with a power miraculously divine

All sentient beings and all creatures,
It understandeth thoroughly without difficulty
Its Bodies of Transformation are innumerable,
And universally revealed in all the worlds

Those who seek after All knowledge
May in course of time attain perfect enlightenment,
Let them above all purify the heart
And complete their discipline in Bodhisattvāhood

And then they will see the Tathâgata's
 Immensurable power that comes from his free will;
 Devoid of all doubts they are, and accompanied
 With sages whose virtue is unsurpassable.

THE TATHÂGATA (2) 5

The Tathâgata, in pure golden color,
 And in person resplendent and majestic,
 In innumerable ages past,
 All merits hath accumulated.

With bliss and wisdom all in perfection,
 And the highest enlightenment attaining.
 And with great loving heart animated,
 He now appeareth in this world of endurance.

Men and devas and the eight hosts of demons,
 All pay him homage most reverent,
 Who, from his inmost self-being,
 Preacheth the deepest spiritual Dharma

Which is so unfathomably deep,
 That Buddha alone can understand it
 Multitudes of beings, ignorant and blind,
 Listening to it, are unable to comprehend.

The Tathâgata is the great leader of beings;
 With skill that is excellent and marvellous,
 Guiding all those ignorant souls,
 By degrees bringeth them to Enlightenment.

The heart of all beings is miraculously bright,
And eternally calm in its being
Pure and immaculate and defilement free,
It is replenished with all merits

Its essence is like unto the sky
Devoid of all limitations,
Knoweth neither birth nor death,
And there is neither coming nor departing

Eternally abiding in the Dharma essence,
It is immovable as the Mount Sumeru
The oneness in it of all beings
Is indeed beyond finite knowledge

Vulgar minds from time immemorial,
Blindly clinging to all passions,
Are thrown deep into the ocean of pain,
And know not how to escape

The most profound doctrine of Tathāgata,
Full of meaning, spiritual and transcendental,
With recipient intellects in all degrees,
In harmony unfoldeth he the Law

A shower of one taste from above
Covering all the ten quarters,
Grasses and trees, woods and forests,
Roots and trunks, large and small,

Of all growing on this vast earth
Nothing is there that thereby itself benefiteth not
The Law delivered by the Tathāgata
May even be likened unto it.

With one voice which is wondrous,
 He giveth utterance to thoughts innumerable,
 That are received by audience of all sort,
 Each understanding them in his own way.

In this wise among the assemblage,
 None is there but that enters upon Buddha-knowledge
 Such is Buddha's miraculous power,
 Truly called "Incomprehensible."

REPENTANCE. *

Those who repent as prescribed by the Dharma,
 Altogether their earthly sins uproot;
 As fire on doomsday the world will consume,
 With its mountain peaks and infinite seas.

Repentance burns up of earthly desires the fuel,
 Repentance to heaven the sinners is leading;
 Repentance the bliss of the four Dhyânas imparteth;
 Repentance brings showers of jewels and gems;

Repentance a holy life renders firm as a diamond;
 Repentance transports to the palace of bliss everlasting;
 Repentance from the triple world's prison releases;
 Repentance makes blossom the bloom of the Bodhi.

Entering into and rising from the Samādhi, spiritual freedom
is obtained

Transforming yourselves and travelling in all the ten quarters,
Have for all beings the cause of evil desire removed,
And let them seek deliverance in the doctrine of Samādhi

Would ye desire to attain to True Intelligence?
Friendly approach Bodhisattvas and Tathāgatas,
Gladly listening to the doctrine transcendental and sublime,
Attain ye the three disciplines⁹ and remove the two obstacles¹⁰

Recognising difference in the disposition of beings,
Apply the medicine proper for each disease
Love and sympathy, skill and expediency, each fitting the case,
Try the proper means for the benefit of the multitudes

Would ye know the true meaning of existence?
The middle path lies in non attachment, neither ye
nor nay,
Intelligence pure is unfathomable and unites in Suchness,
Identify mine with thine, embracing the whole

By the force of intellect, grasping the nature of beings,
Teach the masses each in accord with his capacity,
The force of intellect penetrating through the heart of all
beings,
Destroys the root of transmigration in birth and death

Intelligently judging between black and white
Conscientiously take hold of one and put the other aside,
and let each rest in its place,
Samsāra and Nirvāna are but one in their essence
Fulfilling the meaning of existence, cherish ye not self

• These ten deeds of excellence
Comprise all eighty four thousand
Each in its class excels all the
And is called the Paramitā of 1

Would ye understand the merits of almsgiving?
 Know ye that it comes from the heart pure, and not from
 the wealth given,

A precious treasure with a heart unclean,
 Is surpassed by a mite with a heart clean

Wealth giving is a *dāna pāramitā*,
 And there are other *dāna pāramitās*
 To give away one's life, wife, or children,
 This is called blood giving

Should a man of good family come and ask for the Law
 Let him have all the Mahāyāna sūtras explained,
 And awaken in him the Heart of Highest Intelligence,
 This is called a true *pāramitā*

With sympathy and pure faith and conscience,
 Embrace ye all beings and beset them from greed,
 That they might attain to the highest intelligence of the
 Tathāgata

The giving of wealth and of the Law is the first *pāramitā*

Firmly observing the three sets of the Bodhisattva *śīlas*,
 O ye, evolve the Bodhi distance birth and death,
 Guard the Law of Buddha and make it long live in the world,
 Repent the violation of the *śīlas* and be always mindful
 of the true ones

Subdue ye anger and hate and cultivate in your heart love
 and sympathy,

Mindful of the karma past, harbor ye not evil thoughts
 against offenders,

Be not reluctant for the sake of all beings to sacrifice life
 This is called the *pāramitā* of meekness

In practicing what is hard to practice hesitate ye not awhile,
 With ever increasing energy through three *asankheya kalpas*,
 Defile not yourselves but always discipline the heart,
 And for the sake of all creatures seek ye salvation

NON-ACTION.

As, the vacuity of sky,
 Being so clear and free of cloud and fog,
 Upon the earth below,
 Betrays no signs a shower to give:
 So the enlightened
 Betray no learning, no intelligence.
 And we, sentient beings,
 Can trace no efforts in their deliverance of the Law ¹⁸

SELF-DELUSION

There lived once a painter,
 Who such a monstrous Yaksha painted
 That he himself was terrified
 And losing all his senses on the ground he fell
 'Tis even so with vulgar minds,
 Infatuated, self-deluded by the senses,
 Of their own error they are unaware,
 And go from birth to birth without an end

ALL IN ONE

As all the waters in the valley
 Are emptied in the ocean
 Which is of one and the same taste
 So the enlightened,
 Whatever is
 Good and beneficial,
 Turn over to the Bodhi
 And to that Reality
 In which all things become of one and the same taste.

As waters in the vast ocean,
 Absorbing hundreds of streams,
 Are of the same taste forever,
 Even so is it with all the Buddha's Dharma

As the dragon god with thunder and lightning
 Brings showers on the earth all over,
 And the rain drops discriminate not,
 Even so is it with all the Buddha's Dharma

THE BUDDHA S DHARMA (2)

As in her oneness mother earth
 Creates diversities of seeds
 And in her inmost no discrimination knows,
 Even so is it with all the Buddha's Dharma

As in the cloudless sky the sun
 Over the ten quarters all illuminates,
 And in its brightness shows no difference,
 Even so is it with all the Buddha's Dharma

As high up in the heavens is the moon
 Beheld by all beings on earth,
 And there's nowhere her glory reaches not
 Even so is it with all the Buddha's Dharma

The Brahma raja great
 In thousands of worlds himself all manifests
 And knows in his being no diversities,
 Even so is it with all the Buddha's Dharma

THE PASSIONS AND WISDOM.

Only in the filthiness of soil,
 Could the seed be sown and grow;
 Even so in the mire of passion
 Cherished by all sentient beings
 All over the world,
 If by the sons of Buddha well attended to,
 There will grow the seed of *Buddha-dharma*.

Just as in filth and mud
 The lotus grows and blooms,
 Even so in a heart defiled with evil karma
 The seeds of *Buddha-dharma* are growing.

IGNORANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT. (1)

A mansion there was once which was a hundred thousand
 years of age;

No occupant was there, nor doors nor windows;

Deras and men, all of a sudden,

There came and burned a lamp;

And the darkness that dwelt so long

Departed instantly without a word

The inky darkness that the mansion filled

Resisted not, "I've lived here for ages,

And I'll never be removed from here."

Even with karma-consciousness and the horde of passions
 in the heart,

The analogy holds true.

Though there abiding many hundred thousand kalpas,

Their ultimate nature is not true nor real

When a traveler, day or night,

Enters upon the truthful path,

The lamp of wisdom burns in its full splendor,

And the horde of evil passions

Cannot tarry there, even for a moment.

IGNORANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT (2)

Bright shines the lamp,
 And the inky night is gone
 But with the darkness
 The quarters vanish not,
 Yet this illuminating lamp,
 If not in the dark, nowhere doth shine
 For light and dark depend upon each other,
 No selfhood having, ¹⁶ they're empty
 'Tis even so with enlightenment
 In comes enlightenment,
 And out goes ignorance of its own accord
 But both are like unto the flowers in the air,
 For neither by itself exists,
 Impossible is one alone, either to keep or to forego

THE BODHISATTVA AND ALL BEINGS ¹⁷

Great Mother Earth
 All creatures
 Provides and nourishes,
 But from none of them
 She seeks a favor special, nor is she to any partial
 So is the Bodhisattva
 Since his awakening of the Heart,
 Until he gains the depths of the Law
 And realises the highest knowledge,
 He toils to save all creatures,
 Himself no favor seeking, nor to others granting any,
 Regardless of friend and enemy,
 Embracing all with single heart,
 He fashions one and all for Bodhi

The element Water
 All permeating
 Makes herbs and trees
 In luxury grow,
 Yet any favor special it nor shows nor seeks,
 So is the Bodhisattva,
 With a pure heart of love
 All sentient beings equally embraces he,
 All permeating gradually, universally,
 The seeds immaculate he nourishes,
 Which, breaking down all evils powerful,
 Obtain the fruit of Buddha knowledge

* * *

The element Fire
 Matures and ripens all
 The tender shoots of the cereals,
 Yet the element fire
 From those young plants
 No favor seeks, nor any shows to them,
 So is the Bodhisattva
 With knowledge fire
 Matures he all
 The tender shoots of creatures,
 Yet he from them
 No favor special seeks, nor shows he any

* * *

The element Air,
 By reason of its virtue,
 Pervades all over Buddha lands
 With the Bodhisattva
 'Tis even so,
 Who with consummate skill
 To Buddha's children
 Preaches the Doctrine Holy

THE BODHISATTVA

HIS FIRMNNESS

As Mara, the evil one,
 Commanding his four armies,
 Even by the devas in the Kamaloka,
 Cannot be overwhelmed,
 So is the Bodhisattva,
 Whose heart, pure and clean,
 By all the hosts of Evil,
 Cannot be tempted, nor confused

HIS PROGRESS

As the new moon,
 In size increasing gradually,
 Becomes perfect and full in the end,
 Even so the Bodhisattva
 With a heart defilement free,
 All the good dharma seeking and performing,
 In virtue gradually progresses
 And finally obtains the Law of Purity, perfect and full

HIS ENLIGHTENMENT

The rising sun,
 All illumining
 All forms and images in the world
 In glory are revealed,
 So is the Bodhisattva
 The light of knowledge emitting,
 And sentient beings illumining,
 Bringeth he all to wisdom.

HIS FEARLESSNESS

Lion, the king of beasts,
Majestic, overpowering,
And in the forest wandering,
Knows he no fear, no terror,
So is the Bodhisattva
Calmly abiding in Learning,
Intelligence, and Morality,
Throughout the universe,
Wherever he wanders about,
Knows he no fear, no doubt.

HIS ENERGY

The giant elephant,
With energy wondrous,
A burden heavy carrying,
Shows not the least fatigue,
So is the Bodhisattva
Bearing, for the sake of the masses,
The misery of the flesh,
He shows not the least apathy

HIS PURITY.

The lotus-flower,
Though growing in the marshy land,
By dirt, or mire, or filth
Is not defiled,
So is the Bodhisattva
Though living in this world,
No form of passion
Ever touches him

HIS SELF-SACRIFICE

There lived once a man
 Who craftily and skillfully
 Felled the trunks of trees,
 But left the roots untouched,
 That after due time
 They might once more be growing,
 'Tis even so with the Bodhisattva
 With the upaya that is excellent,
 Desires and passions down he fells,
 But leaves their seed unscathed
 By reason of his all embracing love,
 And thereby ever and anon comes he on earth ¹⁸

THE BODHISATTVA'S HOMELESS LIFE ¹⁹

The homeless Bodhisat regards the home life [or the world
 at large]

As a hurricane that abates not awhile,
 Or as the moon's illusive image in water cast,
 Which the imagination takes deliberately for the real

The water in itself contains no lunar image [real],
 The real moon, dependent on water clear, a shadow casts,
 So are all beings unreal, only conditionally they exist,
 Yet 'tis imagined by the vulgar that an Atman they have

The Atman is the product of conditions, and real it is not, ²⁰
 But for a reality the imagination it takes

Have the two prejudices ²⁰ removed,

And we perceive Intelligence most high and peerless

Our confused imagination is like unto a black storm,
Blowing over the woods of birth and death, stirs up the
leaves of consciousness

By the four winds of fallacy 'tis haunted all the time,
And five damnation-causes it produces,
Entwining are indeed the roots of evil, which are three,
Through birth and death doth transmigration ever
onward move.

Who to the Sutras listen and in them devoutly believe,
The right view they acquire, removing all the thoughts
which are fallacious,
And every instant growing are Seeds of Intelligence,
And the Samādhi of knowledge great and of spirituality
is awakened

When well disciplined in speculation deep and subtle,
In the dark no more we grope, nor do we reap the crop
of pain,

Perceiving Suchness in the ultimate nature of things,
Subject and object both gone, and vanished are all sins
Female and male, they're attributes, and they are void
essentially

The ignorant imagine and create the two which only
relatively exist

The Buddha has destroyed permanently the cause of
ignorance,

And in the ultimate reality nothing particular sees he,
male or female

The excellent fruit of wisdom, if ever attained, remains
the same for aye,

The vulgar nathless imagine wrongly and see therein a
thing concrete and definite

The Buddha's features thirty two are after all no features,
Who sees no features in the features, the feature true he
understands

To wander homeless, and immaculate deeds to practise,
 Over the heart to watch, in solitude quietly to sit
 This is the rightful way the Bodhisattva cleanses his heart,
 Ere long will he attain the fruit of enlightenment

THE BUDDHIST 21

Encourage not, for your self-interests,
 Heterodoxy and false doctrines,
 A merciful heart for all have ye,
 Remove stupidity and untruth from your minds,
 Be ye Tathâgata's most faithful servants,
 And teach the masses who are ignorant,
 To them the Bodhi impart, on yourselves it practising,
 And thereby make the Buddha's name resound on earth,
 Deliver the multitudes from sin and initiate them
 To the perfect enlightenment of the Buddha
 Ye by these virtues firmly stand,
 And your Intelligence heart doth never fail

HYMN TO THE BODHISATTVA 22

With lovingkindness, a Great Being who saves and protects,
 Regards all beings impartially as his only child,
 Energetically, cheerfully and without stint,
 His life he sacrifices, uprooting pain and bringing bliss
 unspeakable

Surely he will attain the height of truth and beauty,
 Forever be freed from the entanglement of birth and death,
 And ere long will he the fruit of enlightenment obtain,
 Eternally peaceful, and in the Uncreate joy finding

A VOW OF THE BODHISATTVA ²³

For the sake of all sentient beings on earth,
 I aspire for the abode of enlightenment which is most high,
 In all embracing love awakened, and with a heart steadily
 firm,

Even my life I will sacrifice, dear as it is

In enlightenment no sorrows are found, no burning desires,
 'Tis enjoyed by all men who are wise

All sentient creatures from the turbulent waters of the
 triple world,

I'll release, and to eternal peace them I'll lead

THE TRUE HOMELESS ONE ²⁴

Though not wearing the yellow robe,
 Whose heart is free from defilement,
 In the doctrine of Buddhas,
 He is the true homeless one

Though not devoid of showy ornaments,
 Who has cut off all entanglements,
 And in whose heart exists neither knottiness nor looseness,
 He is the true homeless one

Though not initiated by the Rules,
 Whose heart is clean of all evil thoughts,
 And open only to tranquillity, intelligence, and virtuous
 deeds,
 He is the true homeless one

Though not instructed in the Law,
 Whose insight goes deep into the ultimate,
 And is no more deluded by sham appearances,
 He is the true homeless one

The mind that takes no thought of the ego,
That goes beyond the illusory phenomena,
Yet sinks not into stupidity
Truly, awakened to Intelligence it is

Whose mind, awakened to Intelligence,
Sees no substantiality in the ego,
And, not seeing, yet remains firm,
This man cannot be injured

THE BODHISATTVA'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

Like unto the vast ocean that receives
All the waters, and yet overflows not;
Even so is the Bodhisattva,
Who knoweth no fatigue in seeking the merits of the
Dharma

Again, like unto the vast ocean that absorbs
All the streams, and yet shows no increase,
Even so is the Bodhisattva,
Who, receiving the deepest Dharma, nothing gaineth

Again, like unto the vast ocean that refuses to take filth,
And wherein when absorbed doth foulness change to purity,
Even so is the Bodhisattva,
Whom all the filth of passion cannot tarnish

Again, like unto the vast ocean whose bottom is unfath-
omable,
Even so is the Bodhisattva,
Whose virtues and wisdom are so immeasurable
That none ever knows their limits

Dirt and dust obscuring their intelligence-eye,
Enlightenment perfect and true they see not;
And throughout kalpas immeasurable and innumerable,
In the stream of birth and death they go arolling.

Wandering and rolling is Samsāra,
No-more arolling is Nirvāna,
Yet Samsāra and Nirvāna,
Absolutely, exists neither of them.

To believer in falsehood and sophistry,
Samsāra is here and Nirvāna there,
Clearly they grasp not the Dharma of ancient sages,
Nor understand the Path Incomparable.

Those who thus cling to forms individual,
Of Buddha's universal enlightenment, though they hear,
Themselves negate, and away they wander from the
right course of thought,
Therefore, they cannot see the Buddha.

Who the Dharma of Truth perceive,
Serene they are for aye, and abide in Suchness,
Enlightenment most truthful they understand,
Transcending words and all the modes of speech.

Illusory are all forms individual,
No such thing as dharma here exists
No enlightened ones
Seek Truth in things particular.

Whose insight to the past extends,
To the future and over the present,
And who for'er abides in serenity of Suchness,
He's said to be a Tathagata.

THE BODHISATTVA S FAITH (3) 29

I would rather suffer sufferings innumerable
 That I might listen to the voices of Buddhas,
 Than enjoy all sorts of pleasure
 And not hear Buddhas' names

The reason why since ages out of mind
 We suffer sufferings countless
 And transmigrate through birth and death,
 Is that we have not heard Buddhas' names

A reality that exists in things unreal,
 A perfect Intellect synthetising truth and falsehood,
 And that which transcends all the modes of relativity,
 This is called the Bodhi

Buddhas of the present are not products of composite
 conditions,

Nor are those of the past, nor those of the future
 What is formless in all forms,
 That is the true essence of Buddhas

Who thus perceives
 The deepest significance of all existences,
 In innumerable Buddhas, he will see
 The truth and reality of the Dharma body

The Dharma body knows truth as true,
 And falsehood as false
 And well understands the realm of reality,
 Therefore, it is called perfect intellect.

The enlightened has nothing enlightened,
 Which is the true spirituality of all Buddhas
 And in this wise they behave,
 Neither to be one nor to be two

Again, like unto the vast ocean in which there's no diversity,
All the waters and streams pouring thereinto become of
one taste alone,
Even so is the Bodhisattva,
Who listeneth to one note of Dharma

Again, like unto the vast ocean that existeth not
For the interests of one individual,
Even so is the Bodhisattva,
Whose aspirations are for the benefit of all

Again, like unto the vast ocean that embosoms the jewel
called "all jewel"
Of which all jewels are produced,
Even so is the jewel treasure of the Bodhisattva,
For it is through this that all the other jewels shine

Again, like unto the vast ocean that produces the three
kinds of jewel,
And yet discriminates not between them,
Even so is the teaching of the Bodhisattva,
Who, equally delivering the three yānas, maketh not any
distinction

Again, like unto the vast ocean that by degrees becomes
deeper,
Even so is the Bodhisattva,
Who, practising virtues for the sake of all,
Forever aspireth after the deepest omniscience

Again, like unto the vast ocean that harbors not a corpse,
Even so is the Bodhisattva,
Who, with the heart of purity and the vow of Bodhi,
Harboreth not a passion, nor the thought of the Çravaka.

THE BODHISATTVA'S FAITH. (1) 27

Perceiving all in one,
 And one in all,
 The Bodhisattva diligent in his work
 Is never given up to indolence.

Pain he shunneth not, to pleasure he clingeth not,
 As he is ever bent on the deliverance of all beings,
 To him all Buddhas will themselves reveal,
 And of their presence he is never weary

He is in the deepest depths of the Dharma,
 Where is found the inexhaustible ocean of merit.
 All sentient beings in the fivefold path of existence,
 He loveth as his own child,
 Removing things unclean and filthy,
 Supplying them with dharma pure and immaculate.

THE BODHISATTVA'S FAITH (2) 28

While to the doctrine most high listening,
 The Light of Pure Intelligence within me glows,
 That shining over all the universe
 All the enlightened ones to me reveals

Who think there are individuals
 They put themselves in the position most difficult,
 Dharmas have no ego master which is real,
 For they are merely names and expressions

The vulgar and ignorant know not
 That within themselves they have a reality true and real,
 That the Tathâgata is not of any particular form,
 Therefore the Tathâgata they see not

Dirt and dust obscuring their intelligence-eye,
Enlightenment perfect and true they see not,
And throughout kalpas immeasurable and innumerable,
In the stream of birth and death they go arolling

Wandering and rolling is Samsâra,
No-more-arolling is Nirvâna;
Yet Samsara and Nirvâna,
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 And well understands the realm of reality,
 Therefore, it is called perfect intellect

The enlightened has nothing enlightened,
 Which is the true spirituality of all Buddhas
 And in this wise they behave,
 Neither to be one nor to be two

They see the one in the many,
They see the many in the one
The Dharma has nothing to depend upon;
How could it be a product of combination?

The actor and the action,
Neither really subsists:
Who can understand this,
Seeks not reality in either of them.

And here where reality is unseekable,
Buddhas find there the resting abode
The Dharma has nothing to depend upon;
And the enlightened have nothing to cling to.

NOTES TO THE APPENDIX

¹ This and the following are translations from some Mahāyāna texts in the Buddhist Tripitaka, which were rendered into the Chinese language at various times from Sanskrit mostly through the co-operation of the Hindu missionaries and Chinese scholars. A detailed analysis of these texts is most urgently needed, as they contain many informations of great importance not only concerning the history of Buddhism in India but also concerning early Hindu culture generally. A rather incomplete idea as to their contents and material and general character will be attained by the perusal of Rev Nanjo's *Catalogue of the Chinese Tripitaka*, Oxford 1883.

Mahāyāna-mūlajāla-hṛdayabhūmi-dhyāna Sūtra, (Nanjo, no 955,) fas. iii.

² The *Avatamsaka*, fas. xiv, p. 73

³ *The Avatamsaka*, (Buddhabhadra's translation), fas. xiv, p. 72

⁴ To conceive the Tathāgata as a personal being who appeared on earth for a certain limited time and then eternally disappeared is not Mahāyānistic. He reveals himself constantly and of his own will in this world of particulars.

⁵ *Sarvadharmā-pravṛtti-nirdeśa Sūtra* (Nanjo, no 1012)

⁶ *Mahāyāna-mūlajāla-hṛdayabhūmi-dhyāna Sūtra* (Nanjo 955), fas. iii, p. 75

⁷ The three rings are 1 the giver, 2 the receiver, and 3 the thing given, material or immaterial.

⁸ Precepts. The three sets are 1 one relating to good behavior, 2 to the accumulation of merit, and 3 to lovingkindness toward all beings.

⁹ The mental (subjective) physical (objective) and oral

¹⁰ The intellectual and the affective

¹¹ *Sarvadharmā pravr̥ttiḥ nirdeṣa Sūtra*

¹² Literally when greed is neither born nor dead This means to live in the world as not living in it This subjective divine innocence is thought by Buddhists the essence of the religious life The consciousness of one's worth or self conceit, is a great obstacle in the path of perfect virtue As in the case of mechanical work or physical exercise we attain perfect skillfulness only when the work is involuntarily done i.e. without any conscious effort on the part of the performer so in our moral and spiritual life we attain the height of virtuousness or saintliness when we identify ourselves with the reason of our being This is Lao-tze's doctrine of non action or non resistance and also the teaching of the *Bhagavadgītā* As remarked elsewhere when a man reaches this stage of religious life he ceases to be human but divine in the sense that he transcends the world of good and evil and eternally abides in the realm of the beautiful

¹³ This is a very radical statement and is enough to frighten timid moralists and God fearing pietists Therefore it is said that Give not that which is holy to the dogs neither cast ye your pearls before swine But think not that this is expounding antinomianism

¹⁴ This and all the following are taken from the *Kāṇḍiyya Parivāṇa* (Donjo 805)

¹⁵ This gāthā may not be very intelligible to our readers The sense is Whatever is done by a Buddha or Bodhisattva does not come from logical calculation or deliberate premeditation but immediately from his inmost heart which in most natural and freest manner responds to the needs of the suffering This response is altogether free from all human elaboration, for the Buddha shows no painful and struggling efforts in so doing Everything he does is like the work of nature herself His life is above the narrow sphere of human morality which is marked with a desperate struggle between good and evil His is in the realm of the divinely beautiful

¹⁶ "Having no selfhood" (*svabhāva*), means that things have no independent existence, no self-nature which will eternally preserve their thingish identity. This theory has been explained in the chapter dealing with the doctrine of non-atman. To state summarily, darkness and light are conditioned by each other; apart from darkness there is no light, and conversely, without light darkness has no meaning. Even so with enlightenment and ignorance—one independent of the other, they have no existence, they cannot be conceived. They are like imaginary flowers in the air projected there by a confused subjectivity. They are nothing but our ideal fabrication. To cling to God only, forgetting that we are living in the world below, in the world of relativity, is just as much one-sided as to lose ourselves in the whirlpool of earthly pleasures without the thought of God. Life, however, is not antithetic, but synthetic. Truth is never one-sided, it is always in the middle. Therefore, seek enlightenment in ignorance and truth in error. A dualistic interpretation of the world and life is not approved by Buddhists. Compare the sentiment expressed herein with Emerson's poem as elsewhere quoted, in which these lines occur:

"But in the mud and scum of things,
There always, always, something sings."

¹⁷ *The Kātyāharaśāstra Sūtra* (Nonjo, 805)

¹⁸ The sense is: The Bodhisattva never desires a complete absorption in the Absolute, in which no individual existences are distinguishable. He always leaves the "Will to live unhurt, as it were, so that he could come in this world of particulars ever and anon. What he has destroyed is the egoistic assertion of the Will, for the aim of Buddhism is not to remove the eternal principle of life, but to manifest it in its true significance. The wishes of the Bodhisattva, therefore, are never egocentric, he knows that transmigration and rebirth are painful, but as it is by rebirth alone that he could mingle himself in the world of sin and save the suffering creatures therein, he never shuns the misery of life. His work of revelation is constant and eternal.

¹⁹ *The Mahāyāna mūlajāti hrdayabhūmi dhyāna Sūtra*, fasc IV

¹² The two prejudices or obstacles that lie in our way to enlightenment are: 1 that which arises from intellectual shortsightedness, 2 that which arises from unpurity of heart.

¹³ *Sūtra on Mahāśākyapa's Question Concerning the Absolute.*

¹⁴ *Suvarna Prabhā Sūtra*

¹⁵ *Suvarna-Prabhā Sūtra*, Chap 26

¹⁶ *Padmapani Sūtra*, Fas 8

¹⁷ *The Avatamsaka Sutra.*

¹⁸ This means that the heart of the Bodhisattva which is pure and eternal in its essential nature has nothing added externally to it by studying the Dharma, for the Dharma is nothing else than the expression of his own heart.

¹⁹ The *Avatamsaka*, fas IX, p 48 This pantheistic thought of the One All is generally considered to be Buddhist, but the truth is that every genuine religious sentiment inevitably leads us to this final conviction. Even in the so-called transcendental monotheistic Christianity, we find the pantheistic thought boldly proclaimed and put in contrast to the idea of 'our Father which art in Heaven'. For instance, read the following passage from Thomas à Kempis: "He to whom all things are one, he who reduceth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may enjoy a quiet mind and remain at peace in God (Chap III). The passage in the Gospel of John declaring that 'the Father is in me and I in him, when logically carried out comes to echo the same sentiment entertained by Buddhists who recognise a manifestation of the Dharmakāya in all beings, animate as well as inanimate. The Christianity of to-day is that of Paul as expounded in his letters but the future one will advance a few steps more and will be that of John.

²⁰ From the *Avatamsaka Sutra*

²¹ From the *Avatamsaka Sutra*

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